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1. Camp meetings

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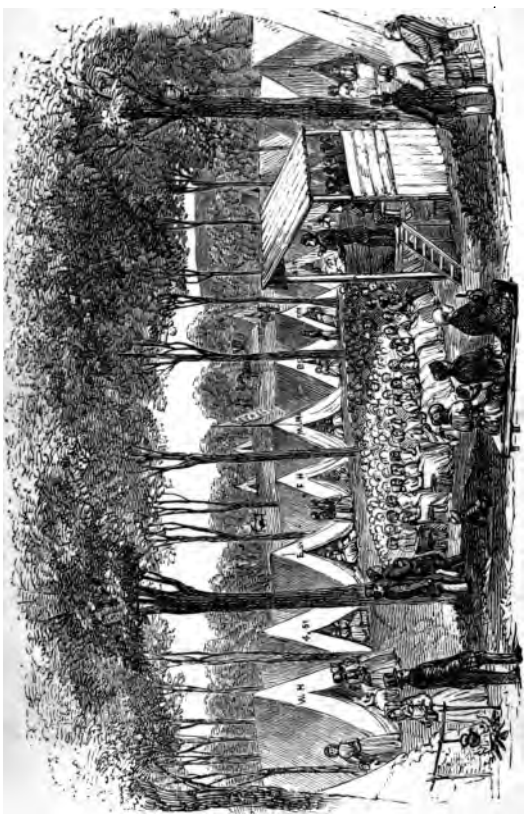
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CAMP MEETING MANUAL,

A PRACTICAL BOOK

FOR

THE CAMP GROUND;

IN TWO PARTS.

BY REV. B. W. GORHAM, †

of the Wyoming Annual Conference.

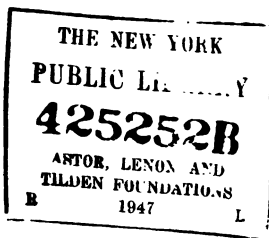
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BOSTON:

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1854.

1853



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INTRODUCTION.

In the year 1845, and while the author was laboring at Cooperstown, New York, his attention was by some means drawn to the fact, that in those parts of the work with which he was acquainted, the Methodists, both preachers and people, were to a considerable extent, apparently disposed, silently and gradually, to abandon the use of Camp Meetings. He felt a regret that it should be so, and began to institute such inquiries as seemed relevant, in regard to the real claims of these means of grace to the continued patronage of the church. The result of these investigations is developed in these pages, and includes the following convictions, as the reader will see:

1. That the hand of Providence—that is, the hand of God—led the church into the use of this form of religious effort.

2. That no change in the condition of the church, or in her relation to the community at large, has occurred, to render the use of these means less necessary now than at any former time.

3. That the practice of holding them is sustained by a sound philosophy, and by ancient and modern usage.

4. That there is a loud call for certain improvements in the methods of appointing, providing for, and holding them.

5. That with proper adaptation in point of the style of their arrangements to the taste of the people and the spirit of the age, they may be expected, with

the blessing of God, to achieve results in the future indefinitely superior to any ever yet witnessed under their operation.

The writer is happy to know that since his attention was first drawn to the subject, the spirit of Camp Meetings is revived in many parts of the country. The danger lies now, doubtless, in the undue multiplication of Camp Meetings. Against this tendency of the present period, it is hoped that some of the views of the present volume may help to guard the church.

But the principal object of the writer is to contribute something toward their greater efficacy, and to aid other churches and individuals attending them, in making the most of them for the practical ends they seek to accomplish.

It is hoped that many of the suggestions may be found applicable to other occasions equally with the Camp Meeting.

B. W. G.

Binghamton, Jan. 2, 1854.

The following Resolution was passed by the Ministerial Association of the Binghamton District, before whom considerable portions of the matter contained in the book had been read from time to time.

RESOLVED, That, being highly pleased with a series of papers read by the Rev. B. W. Gorham, on the subject of religious Camp Meetings, and believing that the wider publication of said papers would be decidedly beneficial to our people; therefore he be earnestly requested to publish them, at his earliest convenience, in a form suited to general circulation.

Z. PADDOCK, *Pres't.*

W. B. THOMAS, *Ass't Sec'y.*

Binghamton, June 8, 1853.

GLORY TO THE LAMB.

MUSIC BY B. W. G.
HARMONIZED BY J. W. D.

Glo-ry to the Lamb! Glo-ry to the Lamb!

The first system of music is in 2/2 time, key of B-flat major. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a repeat sign at the end. The bass line consists of quarter notes.

Glo-ry to the Lamb! The world is o-ver-come

The second system of music is in 2/2 time, key of B-flat major. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a repeat sign at the end. The bass line consists of quarter notes.

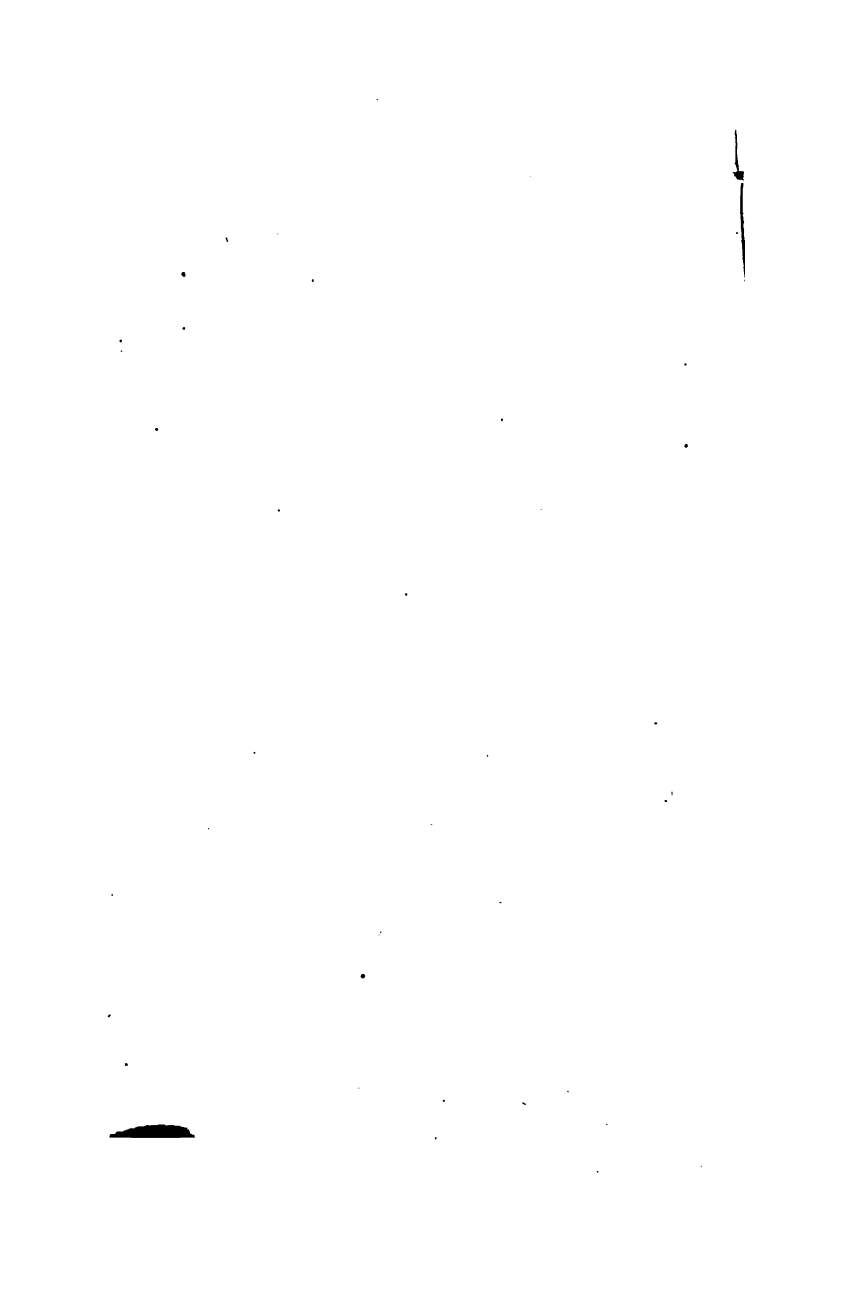
FINALE.

by the blood of the Lamb. Glo-ry to - - - the Lamb!

The third system of music is in 2/2 time, key of B-flat major. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a repeat sign at the end. The bass line consists of quarter notes.

Glo-ry to - - - the Lamb! Glo-ry to - - the Lamb!

The fourth system of music is in 2/2 time, key of B-flat major. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a repeat sign at the end. The bass line consists of quarter notes.



PART I.

CAMP MEETING MANUAL.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORY.

Methodism a child of Providence — Camp Meetings — Originated in Kentucky — The McGee's — A Sacramental Service among the Presbyterians — Wonderful outpouring of the Spirit — First Camp Meetings appointed — Their size — Philosophy of their success.

METHODISM, as a distinct ecclesiastical system, is a child of Providence. The history of each of her peculiar institutions and customs indicates it. Episcopal oversight, General and Annual Conferences, Presiding Elderships, Watch Nights, Love Feasts and Class Meetings, have each a history, interesting in itself, and well adapted to illustrate to what far reaching and beneficent results God leads the counsels of humble men, who, while ignorant of the future, aim only at the Divine glory in the present moment.

Providence.	The McGees.	A Sacrament.
-------------	-------------	--------------

The introduction of Camp Meetings, and their subsequent very general adoption, as a special means of grace, by the Methodists of the United States, are to be reckoned among the instances in which the course of the Church has been shaped by the providential indications of the will of God.

They originated in Kentucky, in the year 1799. Two pious brothers, named William and John McGee, the former a Presbyterian, and the latter a Methodist minister, had settled in West Tennessee. For some years they had labored harmoniously for the establishment of Christianity in that new country. During the year above named, they set off on a tour through Kentucky, toward the State of Ohio. Arriving at a settlement on the Red River, in the State of Kentucky, where was a Presbyterian Church under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. McGready, they tarried to attend a Sacramental service then about to

The Spirit.**The great revival.**

be held. Mr. John McGee, was invited to preach ; and he did so with great power. Sermons and exhortations from others followed, attended by such an outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the assembly, that instead of separating as usual, they continued the meeting ; and others from the surrounding country, hearing of the extraordinary indications of the Divine presence, came in ; and the meeting continued several days ; the people meantime supplying themselves with provisions, and lodging in covered wagons, huts, and booths.

The McGees soon appointed a Camp Meeting in an adjoining district, and subsequently another still ; which were both signally owned of God in the salvation of souls and the sanctification of believers : and thus was commenced that great revival in the Western States which introduced Camp Meetings.

The above facts are drawn from the History

Their size.	Held at churches.
-------------	-------------------

of the M. E. Church, by Dr. Bangs, who states further that the congregations at many of these primitive Camp Meetings were so large that it was impossible for any voice to reach them with intelligible language; hence they were divided into groups, and addressed by different speakers at the same time.

At first, these meetings appear to have been held at a church; and they therefore differed from a modern protracted meeting mainly in the facts that they were more numerous attended, that the people from a distance encamped upon the spot, and that the preaching—the congregations being immense,—was mostly from a window or from a platform outside of the church.

The practice of encamping for religious meetings, however, being thus introduced, it was soon reduced to a regular system, and adopted as a powerful means of promoting the work of God.



Adopted by several denominations.

Philosophy.

In several States the Baptists and Presbyterians still employ them ; and the Methodists throughout the Union, have habitually held them, and have not failed of large harvests of spiritual profit from them, where they have been thoroughly sustained by the church and properly conducted.

Camp Meetings are believed to owe much of their success to the following considerations :

1. They call God's people away from their worldly business and cares for several successive days, thereby securing time for the mind to disentangle itself of worldly care, and rise to an undistracted contemplation of spiritual realities.

2. The mind of the church is assisted in the effort thus to rise by being held so constantly and so long in contact with the sublime truths of revelation.

3. Camp Meeting services are well adapted to exercise the powers of faith and prayer in the

Philosophy.

church ; and they therefore greatly strengthen those powers.

4. By calling large numbers of our ministers and people together, to labor and enjoy in concert, they improve the bonds of christian union among us.

5. They offer to the church an admirable break upon the worldliness of summer.

6. Multitudes hear the gospel at Camp Meetings who rarely or never attend church services elsewhere ; and of those attracted to the place as they have been, by the singularity of the occasion, thousands have been converted to God.

7. Nor are these the only souls converted at Camp Meeting. These meetings are perhaps never held without being attended by persons under a painful sense of unforgiven sin, and who go there with an intention, often secret it may be, but firmly fixed nevertheless, to avail themselves of the extraordinary facilities there afforded for seeking salvation.



The whole family converted.

These have not sought in vain ; and many a happy father in our Israel, has driven his carriage home from the Camp Meeting, containing his whole family of children, rejoicing in the Lord.

It is to be regretted, however, that happily as these peculiar means of grace are adapted to the promotion of vital piety, and splendid as have been the victories won on these spiritual battlefields, some, even among the members of our own church, are known seriously to question their utility.

CHAPTER II.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

1. "They have declined in usefulness" — The fault of the Church — C. M.'s needed now as much as formerly — Growing worldliness of the Church — 2. "We have churches now" — Old-fashioned meeting places — First Camp Meetings held at churches — Practical wisdom of the fathers — Present practice of the City Churches — 3. "There is much wickedness committed at Camp Meetings" — Exaggeration — A sinner is a sinner anywhere — "Satan came also."

1. It has been objected against Camp Meetings in certain regions of the country, that they have declined in usefulness; and this circumstance we are told is a providential indication of the will of God that they should give place to other means, better adapted to the present phases of society.

Not sustained.

First starved, then killed.

To this objection we reply — As to the fact assumed, namely, that Camp Meetings have declined in their usefulness, it is confidently believed that there has nowhere been witnessed such decline, except where the church has herself failed to sustain them by the presence, sacrifices and labors of her members. And how much of consistency is there in forsaking a means of grace, honored of God as this has been, and then pleading the feebleness with which it is sustained as the apology.

Such a course of reasoning and of action, applied to the Meeting House, would first make it empty, and then pull it down ; and, applied to a child, it would first starve him and then kill him outright, because he is poor.

And what has the new phase of society, about which men talk, to do with the question ?

'Tis true there is more intelligence and refinement in society than there was ; but what then ?

The services.	Cities.	Men.
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Camp Meeting services are not barbarous rites, nor do they employ a class of appliances fitted only to rude society.

The religious exercises of the Camp Meeting are like those of the sanctuary precisely ; and consist of prayer, preaching, singing, exhortation and the narration of individual experience.

Again : Large towns and cities are regarded as taking the lead in that sort of refinement to which allusion is supposed to be made in this objection ; and yet the cities continue to employ these means of grace with the happiest results.

The great facts of the human character and of human condition are unchanged.

Men are immortal and their souls are priceless.

Men are sinners, and must be converted from the error of their ways.

Men are asleep on the edge of hell.

God saves men by the gospel, and only by the gospel.

Cause of failures.Worldliness.

Men have curiosity ; and thousands of them that will not hear the gospel in the church, will hear it in the grove.

While these and a score of other facts equally relevant remain unchanged, there will always be a call for an annual resort to the tented grove.

The truth is, Camp Meetings, wherever they are sustained by the church with spirit and unanimity, are still attended with all their ancient power and glory ; and where it has been otherwise, the cause and the sin of the failure lie at the door of those ministers and members among us, who, through covetousness, or indolence, or pride, choose, either to oppose them outright, or, by their indifference, to secure for them an easier death.

The decline of Camp Meetings in some parts of the country, is, as we fear, a providential indication indeed — an indication painfully distinct, of the growing worldliness of the church.

Church edifices.

The old preaching places.

2. Again it is said that the necessity for Camp Meetings is passed away in consequence of the ample supply of church edifices, which the church is come of late to possess.

To this objection we answer that there is not a fact in the whole history of the church to sustain it; for—

1. The Methodists of these States were never in straits for places of worship in the summer time, which is the only season of the year in which Camp Meetings were ever held.

Their ordinary preachings, their Quarterly Meetings, and their Two and Four Days' Meetings, were held from the first, during summer, indifferently in the school house, the grove, the barn, or even in private dwellings.

2. Camp Meetings were never held to supply the lack of church buildings: on the contrary, the first Camp Meetings appear, several of them, to have been held at churches; the

Wisdom of the Fathers.**The city churches.**

people encamping in the fields and groves around, merely to prevent the necessity of a daily return to their homes.

3. Again, The notion that our Fathers should soberly think to make amends for the want of a church to worship in throughout the year, by going into the woods for a Camp Meeting one week of the year, is certainly no very high encomium upon the practical wisdom of those men of God.

4. And finally, our brethren of the cities, where most ample church room is enjoyed, are reaping large harvests of spiritual profit on the Camp Ground. The Methodists of Boston, Cincinnati, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, and many smaller towns, have their regularly established and furnished Camp Grounds; and the blessed localities of "Millennial Grove," Croton, Haverstraw, Sing Sing, Vincent-town, and Blackwood-town, have poured for many years their

"Terrible things are done." Twenty years' observation.

frequent tides of converts into the churches of those several cities.

III. But it is named again that there is much wickedness committed by persons who attend Camp Meetings from unworthy motives.

The writer has attended one or more of these meetings nearly every year, for the last twenty-three years; and in many instances has been connected with the management and government of the ground; and it is his full conviction that there is not even a tithe of truth in the stories, which from time to time, obtain more or less of currency on the subject of the wickedness committed on and about Camp Grounds.

Still it is true that evil disposed persons do go to Camp Meetings, and in some instances, make disturbance there. But what then? Is it in proof that the Camp Meeting has made these persons wicked, or that they would be less so in

Wicked any where.	Satan came also.	Got converted.
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any other large assembly ? On the contrary is it not known that persons of evil and riotous disposition infest all great gatherings of men ? If, therefore, the reasoning which would suppress Camp Meetings on that account be correct, then all Fairs, Celebrations, Anniversaries and Mass Meetings should at once be suppressed on the same ground, and the sons of God in the days of Job, ought by no means to have come together at all, because, when they did so, "Satan came also among them."

Again, we have a fact to plead here. It is, that while men more or less abandoned have attended Camp Meetings, as they have attended other large assemblages, these Meetings are the only sort of great gatherings where these very men have been arrested in their course of wickedness, and converted into good and useful citizens.

CHAPTER III.

DEFENCE.

The festivals of the Jews — “ But they were commemorative ” — Answer — Feast of Tabernacles — Modern Camp Meetings similar to them — Powerful conservative influence of the Jewish festivals — A want of our nature — “ But why not meet in the church ? ” — Answer — A score of impossibilities — Camp Meetings and Protracted Meetings not opposed to each other — Their relative positions. A want of the ministry — Precedents — The Saviour's practice — John Baptist — The days of the Apostles — Whitfield — Wesley.

But we assume that either Camp Meetings or some other means of grace of special general interest, are a permanent want of the church.

The institutes of the Israelites indicate this truth. The Lord ordained for them three great annual festivals or gatherings of the people. We allude to the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost and

Jewish festivals.	Not merely commemorative.
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Tabernacles ; which were so ordained, as usually to fall in the months respectively of April, June, and September, and which were each to hold a week, or in the Jewish phrase, eight days.

In these ancient institutions of the church of God, it is easy to see a recognition of the principle that the church needs her seasons protracted and extraordinary of rest from worldly care, of worship and devotion to God. It is said that these great festivals were memorative of certain great events in the national history of the Jews ; and this is granted : but it does not follow that their monumental character exhausts their design. God is, if the expression be allowable, too good an economist to have adopted general festivals of the people merely as a method of commemorating the Exodus, the giving of the Law, and the encampings of the Israelites.

The expense of time and money involved in these great gatherings would have filled the land

Principal design.	The statute.
-------------------	--------------

with monuments and inscriptions, known and read of all men : and further, it is a matter of historic record, that while each of these celebrations embraced in its ceremonies some distinct allusion to the event it was instituted to commemorate, they were all mainly characterized as seasons of high national and religious interest, and that their power for good among the ancient Hebrews, lay principally in this their adaptation to cement fraternal ties of union, and promote strong religious convictions and aspirations among the people.

Concerning the feast of Tabernacles, the statute ran thus : " Ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations, ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths (tents,) seven days, all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths." Here then, we have, by express institution of God, a religious convocation, identical with a modern Camp Meeting,

The Jewish Camp Meeting.Jeroboam and the festivals.

in its principal or characteristic fact, namely, that the people were to leave their dwelling-houses and live in tents during the meeting.

This practice was to be observed throughout all the generations of their polity, though in after time, a Synagogue arose in every village, and the Temple at Jerusalem would accommodate an auditory of thousands.

Jeroboam found the influence of the festivals upon the Hebrew mind so conservative, that he despaired of ultimate success in his attempt to divide the nation, except by inducing the people to abandon these powerful means of grace and of national strength; and he only succeeded in drawing them from their festivals by drawing them into actual idolatry.

The truth is, human life needs to be dotted over with occasions of stirring interest. The journey asks its milestones, or rather, if you please, its watering places along the way. Our



A standing want of our nature.

nature requires the recurrence now and then, of some event of special interest; something that shall peer up from the dead level of existence, — an object for hope to rest upon in the future — an oasis in the desert of the remembered past. The ancient Jewish festivals that have been alluded to, did meet, and were doubtless mainly intended to meet this want of our humanity.

All nations, ancient and modern, have held their great festivals, political and religious; a still further proof that there is an element in man which demands occasional excitement by such means.

But it is replied; "Granting all this; why will not extra meetings held in the churches meet this necessity, as well as meetings held in the forest?"

We answer -- Because, 1. They do not, like Camp Meetings, call the people away for successive days from their business and cares.

Protracted Meetings vs. Camp Meetings.

2. They never offer so rich a variety of ministerial talent, as it rarely happens that more than two or three preachers can attend a meeting of that kind simultaneously.

3. Protracted Meetings, as they are called, do not amount to anything like a general convocation of the membership of the church from an extended territory, to labor and pray together for the general good.

On the contrary, they necessarily occupy the church in any particular locality exclusively with its own home interests; and thus, instead of promoting extended acquaintance among the members of the church, and binding in golden bonds of union and fellow feeling the hearts of our people, over large districts of country, they tend to accelerate, or, at best, they do not retard the tendency to isolation, now so rife, and it may be added, so ominous among us.

When we shall have church edifices that will

A score of impossibilities.

accommodate from four thousand to twenty thousand persons, and when we can get our people to attend a meeting for a week at such a church, in such numbers as attend Camp Meeting, and when the members of such church will be able and willing to feed and lodge such a host for a week, or when the persons attending will hire their board during their stay, and when the preachers can be induced to attend and labor at such meeting as they do now at Camp Meeting, and when there can be excited in the people at large the same desire to attend a meeting thus held as now moves thousands to the encampment, and when a score of other impossibilities shall stand out of the way, then it will do to propose substituting a meeting in the church for this tremendous engine of spiritual power.

But let us not be misunderstood here. We simply mean to say that there are certain val-

Protracted Meetings and Camp Meetings.

uable results achieved by Camp Meetings, which never can be reached by other forms of extra religious effort ; and we are equally free to say that there are doubtless other ends, equally important, for which other means are better adapted than Camp Meeting. What then ? Let us not discard either the one or the other of these means of grace.

They are well adapted, by their respective peculiarities, to co-operate to the same general ends.

The Camp Meeting is the larger gathering, the Protracted Meeting may be continued longer.

Not more than one Camp Meeting can generally be held to profit in a Presiding Elder's District during one season : whereas as many Protracted Meetings as there are societies may be held, if occasion require.

The Protracted Meeting held in the church, is adapted to the leisure and the long evenings

Their beautiful harmony.

of winter, and the Camp Meeting is adapted to the summer.

Herein appears their beautiful harmony. It often happens that the fire is kindled on the Camp Ground, and burns in the form of a blessed revival carried forward by means of the Protracted Meeting all winter. On the other hand, if extensive revivals of religion have prevailed over a district of country during the winter, and added many to the church, what better thing can she and her children do, than to retire from the cares of the world, for a week, and renew their vows, and brighten their hopes just at that period of the year when the faith of the faithful is likeliest to wane, and when the half fledged piety of the young converts has oftenest yielded to worldliness. But to return.

It must not be disguised, that the Methodist Ministry has wants that are nowhere else to be met as they are met on the Camp Ground.

A want of the ministry.

Our fields have been divided and sub-divided, till the majority of us are alone in our charges. We are little together during the year, and the tendency of events seems to be, still to increase the distinction between *meum* and *tuum* among Methodist Preachers. Nor does any usage of the church, so powerfully as the Camp Meeting, operate to neutralize this tendency. Our modern Quarterly Meetings, where indeed we continue to have Quarterly Meetings at all, usually call together but two of us, the P. Elder and the Pastor. Our District Meetings, which are far from being universal, are not even intended to meet the want alluded to. Our Annual Conferences are seasons of exhausting toil and care. And, in a word, with all the other usages of Methodism, there is still wanting some season of great and general religious interest, that shall convoke these men of God in considerable numbers, and per-

The Saviour's out-door meetings and ours.

mit them, disburthened of all worldly care, to drink together at the fountain of mercy, to cement their friendships at the foot of the cross, and to lose their selfishness, and pride, and unholy ambition, while bathing together in a common ocean of love.

The practice of the Saviour, in holding protracted religious meetings in places remote from the Synagogue and the Temple, and in the uninhabited portions of the country, is, as we feel, a full sanction of the principle involved in the holding of modern Camp Meetings.

True, the meetings are not alike in all their circumstances. The difference between the Saviour's meetings in the wilderness and our modern Camp Meetings consists mainly of two particulars, namely, that ours are appointed beforehand, and accommodations prepared, and that we provide ourselves for food and shelter during their continuance.

John Baptist.

"God's first temples."

The points of difference, therefore, between his meetings and ours, are few in number, merely circumstantial, and certainly not of such a character as to subject ours to the charge of fanaticism by any showing that should exonerate his from a like charge.

John the Baptist appears to have held his meetings out of doors during the six or eight months of his public ministry, with scarcely an exception.

Out-door meetings were common in the Apostles' times, and indeed it does not appear that church edifices were provided to any considerable extent, till late in the second century of the Christian era.

Truly — "The groves were God's first temples." And when, it may be asked, has there been carried on any great process of spiritual reform, without the extensive use of out-door preaching.

Reforms and out-door preaching.

Not only did John, and the Saviour, and the Apostles address their audiences in the open air, but in later days, assembled thousands listened to the apostolic Wesley on the moors and commons of England, and the fires of revival were lighted along the Atlantic seaboard of America by the out-door preaching of Whitfield.

The church has ever become attached to forms and ceremonies as she has lost her power, and spirituality; and her decline in these has been equally marked by a superstitious regard for certain localities.

Wesley declared that, before his conversion he should have regarded it as almost a sin against God to save a soul from hell, unless it had been done in a church. But God showed him the more excellent way, when he filled him with the spirit of Christ, presented before him the world as his parish, and sent him forth to publish the great salvation he had found, in the

Wesley's preaching places.

church, or on the commons indifferently ; now in the streets of London, and now in the market place — to the drunken colliers at Newcastle, to the depraved operatives at Macclesfield, and again to the half barbarous natives of Cornwall. Would to God that the spirit which urged him on were in each of his sons.

CHAPTER IV.

RELUCTANCE OVERCOME.

“What think you of Camp Meetings?”—The result of several visits to the camp ground—Men get what they go for—Means ordinary and extraordinary—Idleness *versus* industry—Jewish festivals—Christ’s meetings in the wilderness—Camp Meetings cost something—The Resolution.

My friend! I am told there is to be a Camp Meeting in this region. What think you of these meetings?

“I think, if people have churches, they had better go there to worship than to go off into the woods.”

Ah! then you don’t believe in Camp Meetings. Did you ever attend one?

“Yes, several of them. I was never much in favor of them, but I used to be told that if I

Several visits to the Camp Ground.

should attend one of them, I would like them. So I have been a number of times, and I must own, I think quite as poorly of them as before."

How long did you stay?

"On several occasions I went in the morning, and returned at night; and I believe I received as much harm as benefit in each instance. Once I stayed several days; and though I became at length somewhat interested in the exercises, I do not know that I was particularly profited."

Did you engage in the services yourself?

"No, indeed!"

How then did you spend your time?

"Why, in looking on, of course, and hearing others."

Is that the way you do when you go to church?

"No, not generally."

Did you ever profit any by a service in

Men get what they go to church for.

church at which you allowed yourself to be a mere spectator?

"I cannot say that I ever did."

But what should hinder your engaging heartily in the services, on the Camp Ground? Were not the services precisely such as you are accustomed to at church?

"Yes, but I did not go for that purpose: I went to see how they managed."

Very well, you saw how they managed, and therefore you obtained what you went for.

The same principle will hold true whenever and wherever any one attends a religious service.

He that goes to church merely to see or be seen, accomplishes that object and returns home. He that goes to be entertained with the intellectual qualities of a discourse, listens to it in a corresponding temper of mind, and is acted upon accordingly: but he that goes to church

"My own fault." "Can't I be blessed at home?"

"hungering and thirsting after righteousness, shall be filled."

"I acknowledge the truthfulness of these statements, and I own that it may have been in part my own fault that I have failed to reap any benefit from the meetings I have attended heretofore."

Do you intend to go to the coming Camp Meeting?

"I had not intended to go."

But do you not need, just now, a protracted season of rest from worldly care, and of devotion to God?

"I need something to replenish my heart with the graces of the Holy Spirit, for I have been long lamenting my own leanness of spirit. But can I not obtain an increase of grace at home, as well as at Camp Meeting?"

Certainly, my friend, if you seek with the proper spirit. But you have had all the ordi-



 THE GREAT FLOOD

THE GREAT FLOOD: I come to you this night
 to tell you that you are to be
 all of you in an extraordinary season like
 to the flood.

THE LORD: I suppose there is no thing in
 the world as the flood which will make
 the world as the flood of the world?

THE LORD: I suppose — Our experience of
 the flood which you have already received
 is that the flood has already been without
 you. But there is in these meetings a con-
 siderable of circumstances so terrible as to
 and the Lord is to reach a
 higher state in the life.

If I were not so, why should the Lord of
 the world great annual festivals for his ancient
 people, the Jews, holding such a week? And
 why did the Saviour so frequently draw the multi-
 tude away from their homes to desert place
 and keep them there even without food?

"Will you go?"Sacrifice of time and money

shelter, for successive days, engaged in the worship of God—I say, why should all this be, if such extraordinary seasons afford no greater facilities for the purposes of personal salvation than the unvarying use of the ordinary means? What think you, will you go to the Camp Meeting?

"I think I will *try* to go, although it will be something of a sacrifice, both of time and money. I like protracted meetings very much, especially if they are only held evenings. They don't seem to cost so much."

Exactly, my friend. You have hit the thing off with great truth. The disposition to offer to God a sacrifice which costs us nothing, has, as I fear, a good deal to do with the preferences of many persons for protracted meetings over Camp Meetings. The Lord located all the great festivals of the Jews in the warm, or busier part of the year; evidently intending

Jewish Festivals.**"I will go."**

that it should cost the people something. Or in other words, intending the festivals as so many breaks upon their worldliness.

"I am not willing to believe that I grudge the expense of an attendance on the meeting about to be held, and I believe I will go this time, and try very earnestly to profit by the services."

CHAPTER V.

GOING TO CAMP MEETING.

Leaving Home—The Special Promise—The Right Spirit—Industry, a condition of Prosperity—Undue Excitement—“But sometimes people lose their strength”—“Are those Exercises genuine?”—Caution against Mental Dissipation—God's order requires us to seek first to be right ourselves, and then to help others as far as possible—Scripture Expediency—There is another extreme to be avoided—Specific Directions.

Good morning, my friend! I am happy to meet you on your way to the Camp Meeting. I, too, am going. The Lord converted my soul on the Camp ground, and I always feel particularly at home there. Did you find any great difficulty in leaving your home and your secular business to attend the meeting?

“No real difficulty. I found I could easily arrange my engagements so as to leave, and the

Groundless fears.The special promise.

more I thought and prayed about it, the more I felt like going: but I was at first a good deal troubled with the fear that some disaster might occur during my absence. One day last week I thought I would inquire of the Lord about the matter. Accordingly, with a sincere desire to know his holy will, I opened the Bible at the 34th chapter of Exodus, and read, 'Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders; neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.'

"I felt immediately great composure of mind in regard to leaving home, and I am now almost surprised that I should have been able to leave my cares so entirely behind, on leaving my residence for the Camp ground.

The right spirit.Guard against idleness.

“One thing is certain: I never set out for Camp Meeting before with the same desire either to receive or to do good, as now. But I need instruction as to the best methods of attaining the good I seek. I desire very much to be a better Christian—to be altogether what the Lord would have me be. Pray, sir, can you give me any suggestions which would be likely to profit me at the meeting?”

Your former experience of the inutility of this means of grace to a spiritual idler will, I hope, put you on your guard against idleness at the meeting you are about to attend. I call your attention to the necessity of spiritual industry, because I have known many persons who seemed to think they should certainly, and almost necessarily, be largely profited, if they could only get to the Camp Meeting.

Formerly you were idle at these meetings because you had no confidence in their utility.



In connection with the following:

References

THE WE WILL DO WHAT WE BELIEVE IS RIGHT IN THE
EYES OF CONSCIENCE IS OUR NEW MOTTO. WE
WILL NOT BE ANY LONGER. WE ARE NOW
WE ARE IN CONSCIENCE A PERSONAL DISCOVERY
OF THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW AND THE
THESE THINGS ARE NOT ONLY THE BASIS OF
OUR OWN PERSONAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITY. THERE
IS AN INFINITE SPACE OF POSSIBILITY TO
THE

Prunumy you will be in some danger of
disturbance of mind at first. A little effort and
self discipline will enable you to overcome that.

"I confess I have had some apprehension on this subject myself. There has often seemed to me to be much confusion at these meetings, in some of the exercises."

Perhaps there really was some confusion on the occasions you refer to. I, too, have witnessed some painful instances of extravagance and want of order on the Camp ground.

Some make unnecessary ado any where.

Some persons are inclined to make unnecessary ado any where and about any matter. Such persons, among others, attend Camp Meetings; and they are there what they are at home excitable, headlong and vociferous.

These persons have sometimes been allowed undue prominence in the social services at Camp Meeting; much to the injury of the solemnity and success of the Meeting. But you should remember two things. One is, that neither Camp Meetings nor any other meetings are intended to revolutionize the intellectual habits of men: and the other and principal thing is, that what strikes many persons as disorder in a religious exercise, is, when rightly viewed, no more than a proper and scriptural instance of religious zeal. Did you ever see more than three thousand persons so affected simultaneously that they cried out altogether, their voices mingling in one universal uproar, "Men

Why these exercises seem so extravagant.

and brethren, what shall we do?" The truth is, we are so much in the habit of seeing men less interested and eager in regard to the interests of eternity than to those of time, that the same exhibitions of sensibility and earnestness which we should regard as every way appropriate in the one case, would in the other, subject the actor to the charge of extravagance or monomania.

"But I have known persons lose their strength at Camp Meeting."

And so did John lose his strength on the isle of Patmos: and so did Saul, when arrested by the power of God on his way to Damascus: and so did the queen of Sheba, at the sight of the wonderful glories of Solomon's house and temple: and so did Daniel, by the river Hiddekel: and so did the assailing mob that came into Gethsemane to arrest Jesus; and so did the soldiers who watched the tomb at his resur-

Precedents.

"But are they all genuine?"

rection: and so did the three disciples on the mount of transfiguration: and so did multitudes fall under the preaching of Wesley from time to time: and so did many persons in the great revival of religion in New England, in the days of President Edwards.

So you see, my dear friend, that these sorts of exercise are not without precedent both from the Word of God and from several epochs in the history of the church.

"But do you think them all genuine?"

It would be wonderful if they were, since there are hypocritical pretenders in every other sort of exercise or manifestation in religion, and in every department of business or enterprise or profession in the world.

What then? "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." If we are to pause on the threshold of any undertaking till all the persons around us shall move and act with exact

Objects which should engross the mind.

propriety, or rather with exact agreement with *our views* of propriety, then surely it will be a long time before we shall do any thing: and in fact, we shall be likely to spend our whole lives, like Dr. Young's fool, "forever on the brink of being born."

What you aim at, is both to receive and communicate spiritual good on the ground. Keep your mind attentively upon those two objects. The same course here which you take in your business at home will give you success. You succeed there, by confining your attention and employing your energies about the business which from time to time you take in hand. Were you to pause to scan the countenance and attire of every passer by, or step to the window whenever any unusual sound might chance to be heard in the street, or pause to give audience to every gossip of the town that might stroll upon your premises, your affairs must



"Get your own heart right first."

speedily fall into the most hopeless confusion and arrears.

It is by shutting our eyes and our ears to matters not pertinent to those on which we are employed, and so pursuing our work with systematic and undistracted diligence, that we make progress even in matters of handicraft. Where mental and spiritual processes are invoked, the necessity of the concentration of the attention and forces of the soul upon its object, is obviously far more imperious than when the matter in hand is one of daily routine and merely mechanical execution.

Pursue the two objects you name,—your own profit and your usefulness to others—in God's order.

That order requires you to get your own heart right *first*. David said, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit; *then* will I teach transgressors thy



The Saviour's injunction.	Paul.
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ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

The Saviour, after commanding the disciples to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, added, "*But tarry ye in Jerusalem till ye be endued with power from on high.*"

Jesus said to Peter, "Satan hath desired to have thee, that he might sift thee as wheat: but I have prayed for thee; and *when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*"

The direction of the Saviour, "*First cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye;*" and that of Paul, devolving the work of restoring an erring brother upon the eminently *spiritual* members, are both significant of the same order, namely: that to be an efficient laborer for the good of others, a man must *first be right himself.*

There are many considerations, of a pruden-



Motive power.

A sound philosophy.

tial character, which should enforce this view upon us.

A man *cannot* labor with much heart for the salvation of souls, whether it be of those unconverted, or of those backslidden—of those seeking pardon, or of those seeking purity, unless he is clear in his own experience of the grace to which he would lead another. He cannot, for he will necessarily lack both the spiritual discernment and the proper motive power for the work.

Again: it is inappropriate and unseemly for a man to be seen laboring prominently for the spiritual advancement of others, while he is confessedly in the dark himself. In fact, such a course would be likely to stumble persons who should witness it, instead of contributing to edification; so that there is a sound and obvious philosophy underlying the teachings I just now quoted from the Scriptures on the subject.



Opposite extreme.	The church's invalids.
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I have been greatly pained at times, when I have seen the members of the church pressed into the work of laboring for sinners, while they themselves were so uncomfortable and feeble in spirit as to give little promise of efficiency or success in the work.

But do not misunderstand me: there is another extreme to be avoided also. That extreme lies in allowing ones self to be constantly an object of the sympathies and labors of others, on these extraordinary occasions. Some persons present themselves there habitually as helpless invalids, to absorb the attention and tax the time and patience of the church, to help them up from their miserable backsliding; while other and far more promising fields are at hand, waiting for the laborers.

We ought certainly never to backslide in any degree. Every step we take should be a step forward. But if a man finds he is backslidden,

"Penitently confess."

"Struggle in prayer."

whether more or less, let him promptly and honestly and penitently confess it to his brethren, at the first opportunity, inviting their aid in prayer for his recovery. Then let him go directly to the cross for help. God will always hear an honest, earnest prayer. Let him resolve at once, in God's name, to meet and route the enemy. It can be done. Let him pray for light and power; and let him use the light and power he gets. The thing is between God and his own soul. He shall have light—then let him meet the issues which the Spirit of God presents—struggling with his own heart in mighty prayer to God, till it consciously yields up every sinful desire, every questionable pursuit, every unholy lust: the Lord whom he seeks shall suddenly come, and his feet that struggled in the mire shall go up upon the rock, and a new song shall be in his mouth, even praise unto our God. Then let him go forth laboring for

"Hasten to renew your vows."

God in his proper sphere, and never backslide again.

One word more, my friend. If you feel pressed with a sense of deficiency or backsliding, don't wait till you get to the meeting — don't wait for any thing. Hasten to renew your vows, and gird yourself with power for the work that lies before you.

CHAPTER VI.

AT CAMP MEETING.

Camp Meetings favorable to health—And why—Our practices and our opinions—Backslidden without knowing it—The word “perfection” in the Bible—Modesty—“Some persons lose the blessing”—Opposition—Paul—The Discipline—Misapplied cautions—Admissions of scoffers—They are designed to answer two purposes—The resolve—Self deception—“If I regard iniquity”—“Cease to do evil”—Exhortations—The prayer meeting—The mourner—The soliloquy—The surprise—The victory—Consecration hymn—“*My Saviour.*”

Well, my friend, how do you do this evening? I have scarcely seen you since we came upon the ground.

“If you inquire after my physical health, I am happy to say that I seem much improved since I came here. I felt some solicitude in regard to my health on leaving home, but

Bodily health.

Some are reckless any where.

really I have not felt so perfectly well in body for several years as I do now."

That is not strange. I have known a number of invalids to recover their health entirely on the Camp ground.

"You surprise me, sir. I have always been impressed that one of the chief objections to Camp meetings was the exposure of health necessarily involved in attending them. Do not persons sometimes suffer loss of health at Camp Meeting?"

Probably they do. However, I do not remember a case as having occurred within my own knowledge; although I have continued to attend them myself for more than twenty years.

Some persons are reckless of their health every where; and without doubt a high degree of imprudence might result disastrously there as elsewhere. Still, there are many circumstances which contribute to render the Camp ground a

Atmosphere.	Scenery.	"How are you in spirit?"
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healthful resort. In an eminent degree there is enjoyed at Camp Meeting freedom from those worldly cares which have often much to do in producing ill health.

The purity and constant freshness of the atmosphere at Camp Meeting is in strong contrast with the confined air of the church or lecture room.

The lungs usually get a freer, larger exercise there than elsewhere. And then, there is something in the novelty of the scenery and the occasion well adapted to banish ennui and hypochondria, and to produce a healthful flow of the animal spirits; while the purest and most elevated aspirations of the soul evoked by the services of the occasion, react powerfully and happily upon the body.

But my question had regard not alone, nor mainly, to your physical health. How are you in spirit?

I am sorry I am not more profited.

Reason.

"I am sorry, my dear friend, not to be able to give a better account of myself than I can do at present, after having spent three days in the enjoyment of opportunities so very precious and valuable as have been the services here. I never heard such preaching or such singing before, nor enjoyed such social meetings. Had the Camp Meetings I have heretofore attended been like this, I should long since have been greatly attached to these wonderful means of grace, I cannot doubt."

It is probable that the difference between this and former meetings arises mainly from the different spirit with which you have attended this one.

"Possibly that may be so. I recollect having overheard a member of the——street church say to his friend, with whom he was walking across the ground this afternoon, that he thought rather poorly of the services at this meeting thus far.

Strolling about.Spiritual condition.

I wondered that he could think so, but I now recollect that I have not seen that brother in a prayer meeting since the meeting began. He seems to do nothing but stroll about and talk.

"I begin to suspect that our practices have much to do with our opinions in this, as in every other matter."

Do you find all that peace and power you desired, in your own soul?

"Not exactly. I have felt a growing solicitude to be a Christian in deed and in truth—to be moulded into a state of higher, fuller conformity with the divine will.

"After I began to pray for this, I gradually came to see that I was much lower in the scale of spirituality than I was aware, and I now really feel that I was not in a condition to die safely when we had our first conversation about the Camp Meeting. O! how possible it is for us to backslide, and not know it our-



Proned to go astray.

"What you need."

selves. I think the Lord has restored me to his favor, although I have not felt the sudden, sweet surprise of joy which I felt when I was converted. The light seemed gradually to dawn upon me, and I should now feel exceedingly happy, were it not that I have such a sense of my weakness and proneness to go astray from God. O, I am afraid to go home, and engage again in my worldly pursuits, lest again I should wander from God, and grieve his Holy Spirit."

Very likely you will do so, my friend, unless you get a higher measure of the grace of God than ever. What you need is full salvation.

"I have been thinking about that, and praying about it, too, a good deal since I left home. I brought my Bible along, and have continued to read, by taking snatches of time between meetings; and I know not how it is, but I seem to find an injunction, or a prayer, or a

"Perfection."The Bible full of it.

promise, or a recorded instance of full salvation, as you call it, every time I read. I am surprised to see how full the Bible is of it. I found the word 'perfection,' with its relatives, occurring so frequently, that I procured a Concordance of one of the preachers, and sat down to see how many passages were quoted in it containing that expression. To my own astonishment, I found that of one hundred and one passages containing the term in some of its forms, forty-six were instances where it is, so far as I could see, clearly predicated of human character under the operation of grace; while in nine other instances, making fifty-five in all, it is used in a manner which seemed to me to imply, though indirectly, the doctrine of christian perfection.

"I assure you, sir, that little investigation of the Concordance produced quite an impression on my mind. I fear I have done wrong in in-



Opposition under a false guise.

judging the repugnance I have felt against the use of those terms. I had all along supposed that my opposition to their use arose from pure motives: but I was obliged to see that that great cause is a modest one which assumes to discuss the phraseology most suitable to be employed by the Holy Spirit, to indicate a given state of soul.

"I was, then, that under the guise of opposing the use of given terms, I have been in heart opposed to the doctrine of Christian perfection itself. O! I wish I enjoyed it in my own soul, but I fear I could not retain it if I should get it."

Why should you entertain fears on that subject my friend? Does not the Lord assure us "His grace is sufficient for thee;" and it is "by grace we are saved" through all the degrees of salvation, "and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God?"

"But many persons lose it."

Discouragements.

"But I have known many persons lose the blessing after obtaining it; and that circumstance has discouraged me quite as much as any other, when I have thought of seeking it myself."

It is but too true, my friend, that some persons obtain the blessing, and after walking in its precious light for a season, relax their hold, and are found again sadly fallen from the high place of faith to which the Lord had brought them.

These things ought not so to be. No one can lose the blessing without committing a grievous wrong, by turning the heart away from God, and in some way treating him with neglect or insult. But, my dear friend, consider a moment. May not the very backwardness you speak of having felt in your own mind, have had something to do with the failure of some of your brethren to retain what they had found? When I hear a man say of another

Have you examined the fall of any of these little ones?"

"Well, he professes to have experienced religion, but we shall see how he holds out," I take it for granted that that man is not going to help him hold out at any rate; and when I hear such remarks made about a brother or a sister who professes to have experienced perfect love, I immediately travel to a similar conclusion in that case.

My heart has often bled for this class of persons in the church, when I have seen how little sympathy and how much indirect opposition they get from their brethren. Alas! my friend, if you have ever laid a stumbling block or an occasion for discouragement, or a fall, before any of these little ones, you have occasion for great searchings of heart and deep humiliation before God.

To be holy is the present duty, alike of you, and me, and every other member of the church; and it is a dreadful error for any one to sup-

Uncharitable criticisms.The pulpit.

pose himself at liberty to stand aloof from the subject, and coldly criticise another, and even watch for his halting, instead of seeking purity of heart himself, and doing all in his power to assist his brother in this, the heavenly race.

Multitudes in the church, I fear, have brought their own souls into terrible darkness by this unkind and unbrotherly behaviour, and have placed themselves where they will be likely to feel immense difficulties in their own way whenever they may attempt to secure the same state of grace.

And then, too, there is by far too little said in the pulpit on the subject. How zealously the Apostle labored, both publicly, and from house to house, "that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;" and, on the other hand, how little practical heed do we see paid, many times, to the injunction of our own Discipline, that we ministers are not only to bring

Fewer helps than hindrances.

as many sinners as we can, to repentance, but also *with all our power* to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord." [See Dis. Part 1, ch. 4, sec. 9.]

Is it wonderful then, that there are many instances of fainting and failure among those who receive this great grace? Alas! how few are their helps and how many are their hindrances!

But after all, my friend, believe me, there are not nearly so many in proportion who fall from the enjoyment of full salvation, as there are who fall from a merely justified state.

Great numbers of professors who acknowledge that they live in the habitual indulgence of sinful tempers, nevertheless talk of their enjoyments in religion, and of their hopes of heaven, even with shoutings and acclamation. Now we all know that there is no religion below justification, and there is no justification while there is condemnation, and there must be condemnation



"Are they justified?"

I have been at fault.

while there is this sinful habit of the life. In other words, we know that such persons do not enjoy any religion at all, according to the Bible. What proportion, think you, of the membership of the several churches, who once experienced justifying grace, judging by their fruits, (and "by their fruits ye shall know them,") are now living in the daily enjoyment of the witness of the Spirit?

And yet we hear people express their caution on the subject, as if there were no backslidings in the churches, or few of them, except from perfect love.

"I see the gross inconsistency of this course, and I confess I have not been entirely without fault in these matters myself, although I had supposed all along that the disposition I felt to watch and *oversee* those in the church who talked and prayed a good deal about perfect love, arose rather from concern for the

A few whose professions are credited.

reputation of the church than from indifference or repugnance on my part towards a genuine work of holiness in the soul of any brother, or in my own soul. Indeed, there are two or three persons whose labors and professions on the subject I have always credited."

And so, my friend, there are probably two or three persons within your knowledge who stand accredited as sincere and real Christians, and in the opinion of the veriest scoffers at Christianity. But, though these scoffers are compelled to admit the power of grace in a few given instances, they are scoffers still at religion itself; and so it may have been with you in regard to entire sanctification. You have fallen in with a few persons, perhaps, whose characters were so entirely and obviously symmetrical in your view, and so marked with a certain in-offensive, perhaps inefficient, amiability withal, that you could possibly raise no objection against them.

"Who are they?"The Man of Nazareth.

This admission, on the part of an opposer of religion, that there are three or four saints in the world, is evidently intended to answer the double purpose of proving, on the one hand, that he is not implacable in his opposition, and on the other, that confessedly, Christianity is "*next to a failure.*"

And who are these that are admitted to stand in the small catalogue of unimpeachable worthies by the opposers of religion? Usually they are those characterized rather by the negative than by the positive in religion—persons who are rather passive than active Christians.

In fact, you will never see a Christian strongly marked by the earnest, fearless aggressive spirit which characterized the Man of Nazareth, but, like him, you will see him dogged through life by whole packs of scoffers and hypocrites.

But, my dear friend, if you have in any degree indulged in uncharitable criticisms towards

The past shall suffice.

Be definite.

those who have professed perfect love or are seeking after it, let the time past suffice; be it yours now to bow your head to the same reproach of Christ.

“I will—by the grace of God, I will.”

Amen; God give you courage, my friend, to contend for the destruction of sin out of your heart, root and branch.

Let there be no compromising—no half-way work—no giving of quarter to the foe. I warn you against the expedient of seeking in an indefinite manner “more religion” merely. Fix your eye on purity—holiness—universal, symmetrical holiness, and determine at once that you will never rest till you get it.

I fear multitudes of professors deceive themselves into a state of false security, by seeking merely some incidental improvement of their spiritual state, while, at the same time, they do not really intend to seek, with all the heart,

Self deception."What saith the Scriptures?"

the destruction of all sinful tempers from the soul. The result is, they are exceedingly liable to practice upon themselves great deceptions. The Psalmist says "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

This text, as it seems to me, contains, within the limits of an aphorism, a whole code of instruction to any one seeking a higher state of grace.

The same truth is drawn out and expatiated upon in various other passages of the Word of God.

"Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his *thoughts*; let him turn to the Lord who will have mercy upon him, and unto God who will abundantly pardon.

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full



Sin cherished prevents access to God.

of burnt offerings of rams and of the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he goats.

“When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me. I am weary to hear them.

“And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

“Wash you, *make you clean*, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, *cease to do evil*, learn to do well.”

These passages warn us against approaching God with the expectation of receiving gracious

An axiom of religious experience.

"Be honest."

answers to our prayers, while we neglect to put away our sins from us, even ALL OUR SINS.

It may be set down as an axiom of religious experience, that God never treats with the soul in regard to its salvation, when that soul consciously tolerates any sinful desire.

If you wish, therefore, a blessing from God, that shall mould and elevate your character, and give you freedom from the inbeing of sin, there must be thorough searching of the heart, and entire consecration to God. Be thoroughly honest before God. Let your whole soul cry out after purity—after God, the living God. Invite the light—look your heart through and through. Let not your vision be arrested and monopolized by the grosser forms of sin you may discover. Cry against these. Cry mightily to God for the victory, but rest not when these are conquered and expelled. Give no quarter to the foe. Pursue the more intangible and



The victory is yours.

Christ the conqueror.

flying shades of sin through every recess of the soul, and chase the fugitive away by faith and prayer. God will give you the victory. The struggle will be painful, it may be, protracted. Satan generally rends the heart he is forced to leave. But be courageous. You shall have the victory. You shall have a clean heart. This may seem impossible to you when God gives you to see what depravity is. But don't despair. Christ is the conqueror of hell. He saves. He died to save. "He is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by him." Coming thus, he will save you:—certainly—fully—*now*.

"I thank you for these counsels, my dear brother, and I do devoutly hope they may not be in vain. Good evening."

Good evening, my dear friend, and may you find a perfect rest in Jesus ere we shall meet again.

Good news."Glory to the Lamb."

* * * * *

"Good morning, sir: I am very glad to see you this morning."

The sentiment is mutual, I assure you, then, my friend. I have thought much and prayerfully of you since our conversation two or three days ago. I judge from your looks you have some good news to tell me.

"To the praise of the Saviour, I must own I am astonished and overwhelmed at the provisions and achievements of grace. Glory to the Lamb!

"At the close of our recent conversation, I went with a very hungry heart towards our tent, on the other side of the ground. As I passed the — church tent I perceived that there was a prayer meeting still in progress there, and feeling much more disposed to prayer than to repose, I passed in and knelt with the

An earnest seeker.**Perplexities.**

praying company, which I soon found to be composed of spirits peculiarly congenial with my own.

“They had been engaged, it seems, a long time, in prayer for a young lady who seemed in great distress of mind, and was seeking, with many tears, the forgiveness of her sins. I learned that from an early hour in the evening she had been engaged in prayer, with much the same exhibition both of sincerity and sorrow as when I first saw her, only that her grief had continually deepened.

“She seemed perplexed with the subject of faith, and all the more perplexed on being told how simple a thing it is to believe. She could believe that Jesus is the Saviour of the world, and that he would save her if she could only come to him properly: but how to come thus, and how to know that she *did* come thus, were the difficulties. I noticed a number of persons laboring with her, successively, and I thought I

An important inquiry.

saw what the real difficulty was; namely, that she was all along scanning her own condition, and examining her own emotions, rather than looking to Jesus. Just then, there was a pause of a few moments, and no voice was heard except her own, while she continued to say in a soliloquising manner, 'Oh my sins! my sins! What shall I do? What will become of me?' I found that I knew her pastor, and I begged him to introduce me to her. She gave me her trembling hand, and met my eyes with such a look of imploring helplessness as I shall never forget. I thought it of great importance by some sudden movement to arrest her attention, and break the current of her thought. I said, with forced calmness, 'Have you any wish to be a Christian?' She looked up again suddenly, surprised and half indignant that a stranger should apparently question her sincerity. She simply said, 'Yes.' I saw that I had succeeded

"But *one* Saviour."

"Tell him so."

in diverting her attention from herself to me, and, without giving time for it to revert to its former object, I quickly said, 'Did you know that there is but *one* Saviour?' That question kept up her surprise a moment longer, and, withal, led her thought towards the Saviour a little. She simply answered 'Yes,' again, but evidently wondered why I should ask such a question. By this time, her tears were dry. Said I 'Are you willing to give yourself *now* to this Saviour, and take him for your portion?' She said, quietly and earnestly, 'Yes.' 'Tell him so, then,' I said, with the tenderest emphasis I could command. She clasped her hands and raised her face to heaven, and said, '*O Jesus, I take thee for my Saviour!*' Then, instantly looking at me with surprise, she said, 'Sir, may I say that again?' 'Certainly,' said I. 'O Jesus, I—I—thou *art* my Saviour!' she said, the tears gushing afresh; and she con-

"My Saviour."

Consecration hymn.

tinued to repeat the sentence in that form, while her countenance beamed, and her very frame trembled with fulness of joy.

"For a few moments, the very atmosphere seemed charged with heavenly love, and the presence of the Saviour was a felt reality in every heart, while that enraptured creature, still lost to all other things, continued to say, '*My Saviour! my Saviour!*'"

"When the surprise of joy had passed a little, some sweet voices commenced singing that beautiful

CONSECRATION HYMN.

Come my fond fluttering heart,
Come, thou must now be free ;
Thou and the world must part,
However hard it be.
My weeping passions own 'tis just,
Yet cling still closer to the dust.

Consecration hymn.

Ye fond pursuits, forbear,
Ye dearest idols, fall ;
My love ye cannot share,
For Jesus must have all.
'Tis bitter pain, 'tis cruel smart,
But oh ! thou must consent, my heart.

Ye gay enchanting throng,
Ye golden dreams, farewell ;
Earth has prevailed too long,
Now I must break the spell.
Go, cherished schemes of earlier years ;—
Jesus, forgive these parting tears !

Welcome, O bleeding Cross,
Thou only way to God :
My former gains were loss,
My path was folly's road.
At last my heart is undeceived ;
The world is given—and Christ received.

“The lines seemed beautifully adapted to the occasion, and the young convert united with the others in singing them. I retired in a few moments, leaving her still repeating, in a voice

"Precious Jesus!"

"My Saviour!"

just above a whisper, '*And Christ received!*'

'*Precious Jesus!*' '*My Saviour!*'

"But the bell rings for service at the stand. I hope to find opportunity to finish my narrative, either before the meeting shall close, or on our way home."

8*

CHAPTER VII.

RETURNING FROM CAMP MEETING.

Of talking, working, and thinking—"Be still"—A struggle for full salvation—How it affected sinners—The young man who came so far to seek the Lord—The consecration—The pardon—Self-loathing—"And is this all?"—The disappointment—The soul in its new rest—"Glory to the Lamb"—The question "can it be retained?" answered—The chief danger—A certain minister "had every thing to learn"—Distinction between temptation and sin—"Manifold temptations"—How overcome—Holiness to be distinguished from its accidents—Profession—Misapplied caution in regard to it—Objections to it considered.

I am very happy to greet you, my dear friend. Pray, let us find a quiet seat, if possible, on this crowded boat, and I will ask to hear the remainder of your narrative.

"I feel a sensible pleasure in complying with your request, sir, especially as I am greatly in-

Working, thinking, talking.

"Be still."

debted to you for the interest you have manifested in my spiritual welfare.

"I hope to repay your kindness to me by prevailing on some friend, as cold and dead as I was, to attend the meeting next year. But I have learned that there is such a thing as dissipation of mind, even in talking about religious things. In the best periods of my enjoyments formerly, I used to love to *talk*, but for the last two or three days I have loved to *work*, and I have loved to *think*. I never knew before, the deep spiritual meaning of the passage, 'Be *still*, and know that I am God.' I never knew how to *be still* before, and I never knew the meaning of that word '*know*,' in the text. O this perfect love! What a calm, deep sea of bliss and purity it is!

"On the next day after the prayer meeting I spoke of, where the young lady was converted, an incident occurred in our tent that impressed

The gracious visitation.

An inquirer.

me very much. It seems our pastor preached a Sabbath or two before Camp Meeting, in a place out in the country somewhere, and about twenty-five miles from here. I heard him say, on his return, that the Lord visited the people very graciously, and that some five or six of the leading members of the church seemed to get a wonderful baptism. He remarked, too, that while the church was praying for full salvation, several persons arose, uninvited, and expressed a desire to seek the Lord. Well, along in the afternoon of the day after I saw you last, there came a young man into the tent, and inquired if the Rev. Mr. — was on the ground. The young man looked fatigued and sad in the extreme. I felt a great interest in him immediately, and half guessed what might be the nature of his errand. I sent a lad for Bro. — and in a few moments he came in. Approaching the young man, and asking his name, for evidently he had no



Coming from far to seek the Lord.

knowledge of ever having seen him before, he was informed that it was S——.

“‘Did you wish to see me for any special purpose?’

“‘Yes, sir,’ said the youth,—his eyes still fixed on the ground.

“Bro. —— was evidently a little puzzled, as well as highly interested; and he inquired further, after seeing that the stranger was disposed to answer only categorically, ‘What can I do for you?’

“He raised his eyes, and said, ‘I wish, sir, you would pray for me.’

“‘I will do so,’ replied Bro. —— ‘but will beg first to ask a few questions.’ The replies to these gave us the following facts: He lived in the vicinity of the place where Bro. —— preached two Sabbaths ago, as I told you. He was at the meeting, and was deeply convicted while the church members were praying for

An earnest seeker.

Faint ejaculations.

holiness; although he was not among those who voluntarily rose to ask prayer. After the Sabbath exercises were passed, he continued to see his condition as a sinner more and more fully, until he feared the earth would open under his feet, and he should go down quick into the pit. He left his home that morning, and had traveled on foot, and without refreshment, about twenty-three miles, to see the man under whose preaching and prayers he was first awakened.

“While he was conversing with our preacher thus, every breath, not employed in speaking, was a sigh, accompanied by an ejaculation, faintly audible,—‘Have mercy!’ ‘O Saviour!’ ‘Lord Jesus!’ &c.

“Soon we knelt, and Bro. — called on me to pray. The call was unexpected, and my excitement of mind was somehow of such a character that I did not seem to get hold of his case much, and after a few sentences of

My need of a clean heart.

"Jesus is here."

intercession for him, I found myself praying for my own soul. In truth, the exhibition of such earnestness on his part, had the effect powerfully to increase my conviction of the necessity of a clean heart, and I could do little but to groan out my desires to God for full salvation. I wondered, too, that Bro. — should ask *me* to pray at all, for one who had come so far for *his* prayers. To my surprise, after I concluded, Bro. — still refused to pray for him, and told him he must pray for himself.

"He immediately began to cry to God; repeating, in a most desponding tone, the same ejaculations I had heard him continue to breathe from the first. After a few moments, Bro. — told him, 'Jesus is here; now give yourself to him.' He immediately said, 'Lord, I give myself to thee;' 'Jesus, save;' 'I will be thine for ever;' 'I will serve the Lord;' 'I will be a humble Christian all the days of my life;' 'I



The victory.Praise.

will obey thee,' &c. Nearly as soon as he began to pray thus, I noticed a change in his voice; and after a sentence or two, he seemed to catch for breath, as if he was so full he could hardly breathe. That symptom increased, till he seemed involuntarily to cry, 'Glory to God!' Then he resumed his consecration, and continued till impeded as before; and then he blessed the Lord again, rather for relief apparently, than because he had, at any moment, any very distinct idea of the operations of grace in his soul. These alternations were continued for some minutes, till, gradually, he became fully aware of the wonderful work which the Lord had wrought in his heart, and he praised the Lord in tones and language expressive of the deepest gratitude.

"He stayed with us over night, and seemed very much to wish that he could have stayed till the close of the meeting.

Instructive lessons.A rejection of Jesus.

“But his duties to his employer, he said, rendered it necessary for him to return home ; and so, after commending him to God, in the morning, we bade him an affectionate farewell.

“I have narrated these circumstances, because they had something to do with the process by which the Lord brought my own soul into the possession of his great salvation—his perfect love. The young lady's case impressed me deeply that I had always erred, by looking too much at myself, and too little to Jesus, whenever the higher walks of the spiritual life were set before me. Hence, I had often said ‘*I don't dare* to undertake such great things ;’ and I had really given myself a good deal of credit for *humility*, in indulging in such feelings and expressions.

“I now saw that very thing in the light of a rejection of Jesus ; as it constantly assumed to gauge the power of the gospel by *my* standard, and *my* habits, and *my* disposition. I began

Self-loathing.

"I must give myself to Jesus."

to be *ashamed* before God. O, how I went down there, for a few hours, in my own estimation! At length, my own image became so painful to me, that I cried to be saved from the power of my own heart, with as much earnestness as I had ever felt before in praying to be saved from hell. Meantime, Jesus appeared an object of desire increasingly precious, as my self-aborrence grew upon me, and I had reached a point where my faith steadily beheld him, though at a distance, when that young man came into the tent.

"My attention was diverted from my own case, for a little time, while we were witnessing his struggles, and his first exhibition of the instincts of his new nature; but when I began again to look to Jesus, I was immediately impressed that his case, too, was full of instruction for me. *I must give myself to Jesus.* But I felt as if it would be an insult to offer him *such a self.*



Self consecration."And is this all?"

O, the self-loathing of that hour! I had seen the time when I felt that I could hardly *afford* to give myself to God, with all my *great* interests, but now the thought of dragging forth a vile worm, and placing it on the altar of that God, before whom 'Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a burnt offering,' was almost insupportable to me. But I retired from view a little, and began at once both in fact and in form, to consecrate all my powers, relations, hopes, prospects and possessions, to God, through Christ. I had little or no struggle then to get my own consent to the sacrifice of any object, and almost before I was aware, I had laid all on the altar. I searched, and searched, for something more to give, and when nothing more could be found, I involuntarily exclaimed, with regret, '*And is this all?*' My heart turned with an apology to the Saviour, and exclaimed,

Humble love.

"God in exchange for a worm."

'Small as it is, 'tis all my store,
More thou should'st have, if I had more.'

"When I had reflected a moment, and found that this was indeed the very point of that full consecration which I was to make, and on making which I might claim the blessing of purity, through Jesus, I was at first in momentary expectation of some wonderful sensations or views, but I seemed only to be let down into unknown depths of quiet, humble love. There was no more a contest in my soul. All was peace—perfect peace. It was indeed 'the peace of God which passeth all understanding.'

"For a time I had no wish to speak to any one, but remained on my face before the Lord, uttering to myself some of the views presented to my mind by the Spirit:

"'God in exchange for a worm'—'I am thy God'—'The kingdom of heaven is within you'

My rich heritage in Christ.Congratulation.

—‘All are yours’—‘The pure in heart shall see God.’ These views, as they broke successively upon my mind, seemed to lead me, as a guest, from room to room, and from story to story, of a mansion, inconceivably rich and beautiful, and all presented by the Holy Spirit to my wondering soul, as its own rich heritage in Christ.

“All vain ambition, all distracting solicitude, all pride and self-will, and all fear, whether of future disgrace, or of poverty, or death, are gone; and from that time my spirit has constantly and consciously rested in the bosom of infinite love.”

I rejoice with you, my dear friend, in the wonderful salvation which the Lord has given you; and now let us, together with this group of dear friends whom your narrative has drawn about us, lift up our voices in a strain of praise to the Saviour:

"Glory to the Lamb!"

CHORUS.—GLORY TO THE LAMB.

See music on page 9.

Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the
Lamb!

The world is overcome by the blood of the Lamb!

Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the
Lamb!

My sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb!

Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the
Lamb!

The Devil's overcome by the blood of the Lamb!

Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the
Lamb!

I've lost the fear of death through the blood of the Lamb!

Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the
Lamb!

The martyrs overcame by the blood of the Lamb!

Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the
Lamb!

I hope to gain the skies by the blood of the Lamb!

Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the
Lamb!

"Can I retain this blessing?"

"O, this heaven of purity and peace! What boundless beatitudes there are in the gospel! 'Tis God with man! 'Tis God *in* man! 'Tis heaven on earth! O, may I ever walk in this light, and breathe this atmosphere of love!

"But, Brother, will it be possible for me to retain what I now enjoy?"

In one sense it is, and in another it is not possible.

It is not possible that you should retain perpetually the *emotions* you now feel. Nor is it best that it should be so. If God had no other object in making you holy than merely your own salvation and happiness, he would now take you to heaven. But he will keep you on earth awhile, to work, to sacrifice, and to suffer for him. Your emotions will be exceedingly various, and will doubtless traverse the whole distance from

"The speechless awe that dares not move,"

Our chief danger.

Prayer an antidote.

down to the "heaviness which comes of "manifold temptations," and to a measure of the "exceeding sorrow even unto death," which Jesus bore for sinners. But your emotions need never be sinful again, whatever may be their peculiar type or degree of intensity. In the most important sense, therefore, you may retain your present enjoyments, and realize a perpetual increase of them.

But my own experience has impressed me that our chief danger of suffering loss, lies, not in the time of our highest joys, nor in the time of our deepest depressions, but in allowing the mind to get into a state of indifference and carelessness.

Prayer is the preventive and the antidote. Prayer as a *habit*, developing itself in watchfulness, inward recognition of God, thanksgiving, ejaculations, and frequent pleadings for deeper baptisms of the Spirit.

Disappointment.**Every thing to learn.**

When I first experienced the blessing of perfect love, my evidence was very clear; but it was accompanied with a wonderful sense of weakness. I might call it perhaps, *a feeling of inward faintness.*

I naturally sought counsel of persons more experienced than myself, but the Lord suffered me to be disappointed on every hand. I was, therefore, obliged to feel my way along as best I could.

I was immediately struck with the fact, that though I had been a professor some eleven years, and a minister seven, I had made very little proficiency in the knowledge of the human heart, the devices of Satan, or the deep spiritual meaning of the Word of God. I used sometimes to say to myself, "I see I have every thing to learn."

One of the first things I had to learn, was to distinguish between temptation and sin. I found

A tender conscience.**Sinful thoughts.**

I had not been in the habit of marking, with any considerable accuracy, the operations of my own mind, and that I was almost a stranger to myself. My heart had not been in a condition to feel the acute pain it now felt, on the approach of any sinful suggestion, or a sinful desire; nor had I been in the habit of demanding of myself that nice and constant inward adjustment to the will of God, which I now found to be a pre-requisite of my peace.

At first, I was inclined to think that all images of any thing sinful which became pictured on the imagination, were, in fact, sinful thoughts, till I observed that those thoughts were invariably painful to my soul, and that the mind instinctively resisted them, and strove for their expulsion till they were gone, when it immediately returned to its rest in God. Hence, at length I learned,

1. A sinful impression, or suggestion, resisted

Satan's devices.Manifold temptations.

till it disappears, is temptation, and only temptation — not sin.

2. A sinful suggestion, courted or tolerated, or at length complied with, is sin.

Again, a favorite method with the enemy, at first, was to endeavor to surprise me into a surrender of my confidence.

He had two methods of attempting this. One was, to arrest my mind suddenly, in the midst of some engagement, which, by occupying the attention, had precluded regular meditation for a season, and so left the mind destitute of emotion, with the suggestion, "*You have lost it!*"

The other, was to thrust into the mind some very horrid temptation to sin, and then instantly accuse the heart of wickedness for having had such a thought. I do not know that that device of Satan, of folding one temptation in another thus, is what Saint Peter alludes to

Perplexing suggestion.Not always from Satan.

when he speaks of "manifold temptations," through which the "strangers elect through sanctification of the Spirit," to whom he writes, were in heaviness: but I *do* know that my own soul was often brought into heaviness by one temptation thus folded in another. I inquired of several, "What shall I do with the suggestion which sometimes comes to me, '*You have lost it!*'" Some said, "You must say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan!'" Others said, "Brother, you must not reason with the enemy." But I found those directions not sufficiently specific, or rather, not sufficiently discriminating.

For, thought I, I am liable to sin, and if I should do wrong, the conviction would doubtless come to my mind, that I had lost the blessing. Now, I am not at liberty to set down every impression that I have sinned, and so lost my hold on God, as coming from Satan. By supposition, it may be true; and on the other hand,

Re-consecration.	Its benefits.
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it may be false. What then? I found it did not do to stand parleying upon the question of the truth or falsity of such impressions, when they came to the mind. Such parleys brought me always into darkness. I at length saw that I needed some resort equally applicable, whether there had been any defection or not. This I found to be an immediate re-consecration of the soul to Christ. Accordingly, whenever any doubt arose as to the present state of the heart in regard to purity, I would make an effort just then and there, to cast all my being anew on the all-hallowing altar of sacrifice. If I found any degree of resistance from within, I struggled with my heart till it yielded: if I found no such resistance, the re-consecration was the work of but a moment; and in either case, I had the benefit of the exercise of prayer. I got a stronger hold on Christ; I learned, in every such struggle, something more of the way of

Holiness.	In what it consists.
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salvation; and in the course of the effort at re-consecration, I always obtained clear light upon the question, whether there had been in my heart any degree of wandering from God. That particular form of conflict soon disappeared.

Again: I early found it necessary to let the idea of holiness stand *alone* in my mind;—separate entirely from all accidents of joy or sorrow, or indeed any other state of the emotions. If the soul is now consciously disentangled from every sinful affinity, and in a state of present, felt concurrence with the will of God,—that is holiness—that is full salvation.

There may be sorrow, there may be trials, there may be powerful temptations and inward buffetings, there may be a degree of darkness and bewilderment of mind in regard to the meaning of the Divine dealings with the soul; and all this may be attended with loss of liberty in prayer, and, for a season, with loss of *sensible*

Specific testimony.It honors Christ.

communion with God. Still, the soul may utterly refuse all earthly cordials, all sensual delights, and cling, with chastened sorrow and many tears, to the Divine bosom, saying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in earth that I desire beside thee."

I found, too, that if I would remain clear in my witness of perfect love, I must be specific in my testimony. I never heard any one say, "I am a perfect Christian," and I never felt that it would be proper for me to say, "I am a holy man;" or, indeed, to speak of the state of grace to which the Lord had brought me, in any terms which made me the hero of my own story. Still, I found that in the sober use of Scripture terms I must testify explicitly of what the Lord had done for me.

I have often found it peculiarly crucifying to bear that testimony, and yet I have found it profitable in a high degree. It honors Christ,

Opposition.**Objections examined.**

it encourages others to seek the blessing, and, when properly borne, it mortifies and humbles the soul, and induces such a clinging to Christ as perhaps can be realized in no other way.

I have often wondered why there should be such opposition as displays itself in some instances, to the bearing of a specific testimony on the subject of perfect love.

It is objected against these testimonies, that we are liable to mistake our own state; and that is doubtless true: but then, where is the propriety of making any profession of religion at all? for certainly, the liability to mistake is greater with a seeker of justification than with a seeker of inward purity.

Yet I have often seen persons of no considerable acquaintance with the Scriptures, and almost no knowledge at all of their own hearts, who, after presenting themselves for prayer, have indicated that they felt a measure of peace,

The life and the profession have not harmonized.

encouraged and *urged* to arise at once and declare what the Lord had done for them, while the same individuals who thus urge seekers to profess pardon, will speak *only* in the language of caution to the members of the church, who have been for years careful students of the Scriptures, and habitual scrutinizers of their own mental states, upon the subject of declaring that God has answered their prayers for full salvation.

It is objected again, that many persons have professed full salvation, whose subsequent lives have not invariably exemplified the purity which they had professed. Alas for us ! that is but too true. But what then ? How is it with those who profess pardon ? Is it not even a very *uncommon* thing to see one whose whole future career exhibits no inconsistencies—no deviations—no departures from God ? Why not apply the rule equally to the two classes of persons ?

Profession.

"They may be deceived."

If the fact that some persons have made profession of perfect love, and have not retained what they received, or have found at length that they were deceived at the time in regard to their own exercises—I say, if that fact is a reason why we should use such caution in regard to such professions, then certainly, similar mistakes and failures in regard to a primary experience of gospel salvation should induce equal caution there.

I presume if a reserve such as we sometimes see exhibited in regard to preaching, and praying, and exhorting, on the subject of present personal purity of heart, were to become universal in the church, in regard to the subject of justification, it would be but a few months before such a thing as a clear case of conversion would become a rare occurrence among us. Of the few persons, who, under such circumstances, would consent to profess justification, it

Antidote.**There will be failures.**

is probable the larger part would be ignorant and forward persons, whose professions would be any thing else than an honor to the gospel.

What, then, is the antidote? Why, manifestly, if we wish to give symmetry to the developments of Christian principle in the church, we must present and enforce all the duties and privileges of men under the gospel, and encourage, and urge forward, and direct every degree of spiritual attainment and manifestation among the people. Doubtless there will be failures, here and there, in every part of the work; and enough of them, too, to give every man the heart-ache who has a care for the souls of men.

But what then? There would be success, too; glorious success, such as never need be looked for under a supervision of reluctance, discouragement, and restraint.

Be it yours, then, my dear friend, to bear a

Bear a steady and humble testimony.

steady testimony, with all humility and meekness, of the power of Jesus to save unto the uttermost, and let us ever see that our lives are in unison with our testimony.

I hope often to hear of your *constancy*, *industry*, and *growth*. But I see the boat is at the wharf. May the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus. Farewell.

PART II.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS AND DIRECTIONS.



CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARIES AND INCIDENTALS.

Camp Meetings should be held by Districts—How appointed—Selection of the best time of year for Camp Meeting—Length of the meeting—Preparation of the ground—Should be thorough—And why—Area of ground suitable for given numbers in attendance—Shape of ground—Items of the work of preparation.

The success of a Camp Meeting depends, to a very considerable extent, on the good sense and efficiency with which its arrangements are made, and its services conducted.

I. *The appointment.* In the rural portions of our work it is not best to hold a Camp Meeting for a single circuit, or even for two or three circuits jointly, under any ordinary circumstances. Small Camp Meetings are not usually of much account. Hence, District Camp Meetings

Camp Meetings should be held by Districts.

will be found, upon trial, I have no doubt, indefinitely superior to those held by a charge or two, independently.

In some cases, it may, doubtless, be proper to hold two of them in the same District during one season; say one in July, and the other in September; but they should, if possible, both be District meetings, in name and in fact. That is, they should both be under the immediate supervision of the Presiding Elder, and manned by the preachers, and, as far as possible, the praying men of the *whole District*.

They should be appointed by the preachers of the District, in council, together with a delegation of laymen, if possible: and the several questions of the time, the place, and the length of the meeting, all discussed with prayerful solicitude.

A notice of several months should be given, that the people may have time to forecast and

Committee of arrangements.Selection of site.

arrange their business, so as to attend in the largest numbers possible.

At the council, a judicious and efficient Committee of Arrangements should be appointed or provided for.

This committee will sometimes have to determine the place of the meeting, and the following suggestions are submitted for their consideration :

II. *The selection of site.* This is a matter of very high importance, in order to a good Camp Meeting ; and the committee should direct their attention mainly to the following points :

1. Is there a bountiful supply of good water at hand ?
2. Is it in a neighborhood of Methodists, or among people who will be likely to sympathize with, and sustain order in a meeting ?
3. Are there adequate pasture grounds near by ?

Selection of site.	Directions.
4. Is the canopy of shade nearly complete?	
5. Is the ground easy of access from principal thoroughfares?	
6. Is it central in the District, or nearly so?	
7. Can lumber for stand and seats be procured with facility?	
8. Will the owner of the ground, or of contiguous woodlands, allow the cutting of poles for tents, and the use of wood for fuel?	
9. Is the surface a dead level, or very little inclined?	
10. Is it free from cradle knolls?	
11. Is there considerable extent of forest land, or any other fact by which the ground will be screened from the wind?	

The foregoing questions are arranged in the order in which they are believed to be relatively important.

III. *The time.* This will, doubtless, be usually fixed upon by the council that appoints the

The best time for holding Camp Meetings.

meeting; and they will be able to judge of the best period for it, in view of the usual course of the seasons, and the probable posture of the industrial affairs of the country at any particular date. In the latitude of the Middle States, a day somewhere between the 20th of June and the 15th of July, or else between the 20th of August and the 15th of September, has been found, I think, peculiarly propitious for a large and successful Camp Meeting.

It is a fact worthy of being remembered, however, that at the first named period, the bark is loose on the trees; rendering them peculiarly liable to be girdled and destroyed by the horses that may be fastened to them, during the meeting.

IV. *The length of the meeting.*

The policy of short Camp Meetings I regard as singularly inconsistent with the whole design and spirit of the meeting itself. These meetings

Length of the meeting.

owe their astonishing power, in great part, to the fact that they draw people away from their business and worldly cares; and consequently, if the absence from these is not sufficiently protracted to allow time for the thorough disengagement of the attention from secular concerns, an important object is sacrificed. On the other hand, the meeting should not be so long as to wear out the laborers, or as to render it necessary for a considerable number of the members to leave before the close. Doubtless, from five to eight days will be found a suitable length of time for their continuance, according to the circumstances of the mass of the people who attend them. The length of the meeting should be announced in the original notice given for its commencement; and no ordinary circumstance should induce a departure from the advertised time of closing.

Preparation of ground.	Directions.
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V *The preparation of ground.*

It should always be an object to have the ground very thoroughly prepared. Such preparation affords facilities for the success of the meeting. It presents attractions to our people and the congregation generally, and it contributes to good order, by inspiring respect, instead of exciting contempt, among irreligious and irreverent persons who attend from mere curiosity.

The following directions may perhaps be useful to a committee not well acquainted with the business:

1. If it is probable that there will be an hundred family tents, or their equivalent in society tents, then the ground, *within the tents*, should be at least half an acre; or a full acre, including the sites of the tents themselves; and the ground should be larger or smaller, in proportion, for a larger or smaller meeting.

Clearing and grading.	Stand.
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2. In shape it should be nearly circular.
(See ground plan.)

3. The first work to be done after ascertaining your bounds, is to clear the ground of all underbrush, stumps, roots, and such dead trees as may be liable to fall, in case of strong wind, during the meeting. The remaining trees should then be trimmed, up to the height of ten or twelve feet.

4. The next work is to grade the ground, as far as consistent, to a true level. For obvious reasons, the clearing of the ground, trimming of trees, and especially the grading, should be done some weeks before the meeting.

5. Next, if you have not done it before, select the place for your stand. The natural position for this will usually be decided by the shape or profile of the ground: but when there is freedom of choice, the stand should be on the northern side of the ground, that the con-

Broad Aisle.	Altar.
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gregation may not be annoyed by having the sun in their faces through any openings which may exist in the foliage.

6. When this is done, the centre, or broad aisle, should be laid out, exactly in the centre of the ground, and running from a point in front of the centre of the stand, and about thirty-five feet from it, back towards the rear of the ground. This broad aisle should be seven feet wide where the seats are located.

The work of building the stand and the altar, and of seating the ground, may now go on simultaneously, if there be laborers enough. I propose to offer a few observations upon each, in order.

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CHAPTER II.

BUILDINGS AND FIXTURES.

The stand—Its site—Its size—Details of its construction—The altar—Seating of the ground—The broad aisle—The seats—Number of aisles—*Ground plan*—Supply of water.

I. *The building of Stand.*

The site for the stand will of course, in most cases, have been selected when the ground itself was chosen.

A convenient shape for the stand, is twelve feet deep by sixteen front. To build it, proceed as follows :

1. Lay down five sleepers, level them, and make them firm, and as low as possible, lest the speaker, whose standing will be 6 1-2 feet above, should be too high for the convenience of the congregation.

The stand.	Details of its construction.
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2. Upon these sleepers lay a single board floor.

3. Then take two strong scantlings, fourteen feet long for the front, and two others, twelve feet long, for the rear. Set them up on end on the four corners of the floor, and nail on the boards.

4. Make the door of the stand, next to the rear post, on the left hand side of the speaker.

5. The speakers' floor should be 6 1-2 feet above the lower one, well supported, and of two thicknesses of boards.

6. The stairs (not a ladder) should start immediately from the door, and project above the speakers' floor, so that the upper step may serve as a seat.

7. From the speaker's floor up to the roof, there should run a partition, dividing the upper part of the stand into two equal rooms, front and rear. This partition should run from the

Construction of the stand.

side of the stand on the speakers' right, to a point within a foot and a half of the stairs. In front of this partition, there should of course be a seat located for the preachers in attendance, and the room in the rear will afford a convenient place for secret devotions, and for lodging. A portion of the lower room can be used in the same way.

8. The roof should be covered with boards, sixteen feet long, which should project as much as possible in front: and unless they are remarkably sound, there should be three thicknesses.

9. Of course the front should be boarded only up to the book board, which should be two feet ten inches, or three feet, above the speakers' floor. The whole may be built of boards unplanned, except the book board, and the seat, and some two or three boards of the partition next above the seat.

The altar.	Entrances to it.
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The foregoing suggestions are made in view of such camp grounds as may not be furnished with a preachers' tent. Where there is such a tent, the stand may be much simpler, and, indeed, need consist only of a rude rostrum or platform, properly canopied. (See frontispiece.) Generally, however, the speakers' floor ought to be about six feet high, unless the ground be amphitheatral in shape.

II. *The Altar.*

The altar should generally be at least twenty-five feet square, but its particular shape must depend, in part, upon circumstances. If you have plank twelve feet long, the altar should be twenty-eight feet broad, so as to allow of an aisle, four feet wide in the centre.

The entrances to the altar should be at the two front corners of the stand, and, I think, *only* there. The ground within the altar should be graded to an exact level; and after the

Seating of the ground.

railing and the supports for the seats are located, should be covered, if possible, with a coating of saw dust or tan bark, and at the commencement of the meeting, there should be added a thick covering of straw.

III. *Seating of the Ground.*

The first work here, is to locate the broad or central aisle. In some sense, this is supposed to have been done when the location for the stand was fixed upon, but now you are to lay it out.

Set a stake precisely in front of the centre of the stand, and distant ten feet from the altar rail. Then go quite to the rear of the ground and set another, for the centre of the aisle there, and arrange a convenient number in an exact line between the two.

Four and a half feet on each side of this line of stakes, is the proper place for the line of support for the seats next to the aisle. This

The seats.Their supports.

will leave a space of nine feet, and if the planks shall be so laid as to project one foot into the aisle, you will then have your central aisle seven feet broad.

The seats should be of plank, and sixteen feet long, if possible. They should not be lapped at the ends, but there should be an aisle between every two tiers of seats, or, in other words, as many aisles as possible; and no aisle should be narrower than five feet.

The supports for the seats may be logs or sticks of timber, if they are abundant, and labor scarce. A better method, however, is to drive a row of small piles, saw them off to a line, and spike a scantling on the top of them. If the seats are sixteen feet long, you will need three tiers of supports under each tier of seats. The supports under the seats in the altar should be of the kind above preferred, at all events.

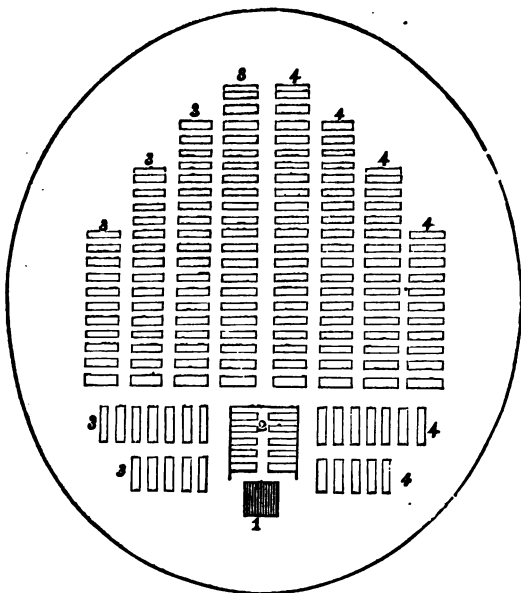
Retirement.The water.

The preparation of a Camp ground is essentially incomplete while there are wanting adequate provisions for the retirement of at least the female portion of the congregation.

IV. *The Water.*

If the supply of water is not *very* large, it will be well to locate several large tanks.

A congregation of several thousands will consume an amount of water entirely incredible to persons not experienced in such matters; and the reader will remember that these suggestions are made for such persons mainly.



Ground plan of Camp Ground, 14 by 16 rods. Scale, 5 rods to the inch.

REFERENCES :

1. Stand, or speakers' platform.
2. Altar.
3. Seats—ladies' side.
4. Seats—gentlemen's side.
- C. Circle on the outside of which the tents are to be built.

CHAPTER III.

TENTS.

Permanent tents—Temporary Tents—Shanties—Objections to them—A family tent—How constructed—*End view of family tent*—Necessity for society tents—How to provide for one—Construction—*End view of society tent*—Suggestions in regard to a boarding tent.

I am aware that in many places there is scarcely any such thing known as the construction of temporary tents from year to year. Our brethren of the principal cities, and of many other localities of the east and south, use scarcely any but those constructed of sail cloth, in substantially the same manner as those used in the army. Undoubtedly that is the more excellent way; but there are large sections of

Shanties.Objections to them.

the country where the people depend solely on such temporary constructions as they may find it convenient to provide from year to year.

The following suggestions are submitted for the consideration of persons and societies who intend to build a temporary tent.

To the construction of *shanties* on the Camp ground, under the dignified title of "*board tents*," there are several grave objections.

1. Their *appearance* is calculated to excite a class of low and ludicrous ideas, since they give a spectator rather the idea of a huddle of Irish rail-road shanties, than of a worshipping people "dwelling in the goodly tents of Jacob."
—Numb. xxiv. 5.

2. They are dark and unpleasant within, as well as unsightly without.

3. They do not afford as thorough protection from rain as a cloth tent, properly constructed.

4. They are more expensive than the latter.

Cloth Tents.	How constructed.
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To construct a cloth tent for a family of six or eight persons, I would proceed as follows:

1. Select the site, and grade a space twelve feet square to an exact level.

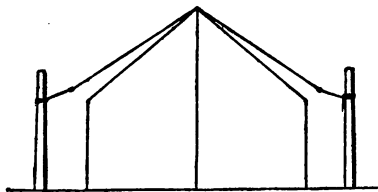
2. Plant three posts for each side of the tent, and nail a board on the bottom, and a strip along at a height say of just five feet. The board at the bottom will prevent the necessity of bringing the cloth to the ground, thereby exposing it to mildew, and the strip at the eaves is the plate. The space between may be filled with cloth, running longitudinally.

3. I then take forty yards of such factory cloth as I shall want for family use subsequently, and divide it into eight equal strips of five yards each. Then run four strips together, and I have the first roof, which I throw over the ridgepole, and draw down and tack to the plate.

4. The other four strips run together in the

Family Tent.

same way make the second roof, or fly. This I throw over the first roof, and let it rest on it at the ridge; but the eaves are to be fastened in another way, as follows: Hem the cloth at the eaves, and insert a small scantling or pole. Then attach a cord to the pole at each corner, and at each seam. These cords are to be fastened to stakes so as to strain the cloth well, and raise it at the eaves say about one foot above the other roof.



End view of Family tent 12 ft. wide. Scale 10 ft. to the inch.

The above cut gives you an end view of such a tent as I have described. In this instance,

Each society should have a tent.

the ridgepole is just four feet higher than the plates.

If it is desirable to give more pitch to the roof, it may of course be done, by building the tent a little narrower; say eleven feet, or even ten. However, a tent built upon the above plan will shed rain perfectly, if thoroughly constructed.

As I remarked before, this tent is of suitable size for a family tent. But it is very desirable to have a large number of society tents on the ground. Every charge represented on the Camp ground should have at least one large tent, if possible, where the members can hold their prayer meetings together, under the supervision of the pastor; and every such tent and society should be a centre of influence for the promotion of the work of God as *connected with that charge and neighborhood*. A convenient size and shape for a society tent, is twenty by thirty

Society tents.	How procured.
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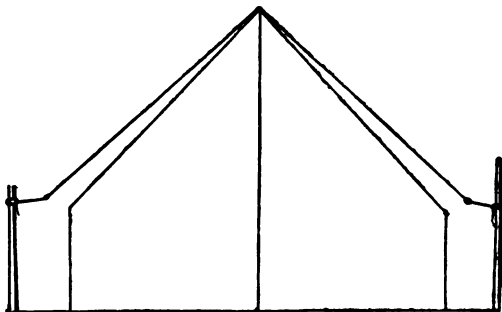
feet. Any preacher who is willing to put forth any considerable effort, can get up a society tent among the people unless there be indeed some most extraordinary hindrance.

To effect this, let the necessary number of families furnish each a piece of factory cloth, just such as they will severally want for use afterwards. Let each lady divide her own cloth into two yard strips, and mark each strip as her own. There must be cloth enough for twenty of these strips, allowing the cloth to be a yard wide, in order to construct a double roof.

On a given day, let the ladies meet, and run ten breadths together for the first roof, and the remaining ten for the second. The construction of the tent will proceed substantially in the same manner as that of the family tent just described. The ridgepole, if the tent be made just twenty feet wide, must be eleven feet

Construction of Society tent.

higher than the eaves. If the work of putting it up be properly and thoroughly done, it will bear, as you will see by the following cut, to be made twenty-two feet wide; in which case the ridgepole must be but ten feet higher than



End view of a Society Tent 20 ft. wide. Scale 10 ft. to the inch.

the eaves. However, a large tent will not bear as flat a roof as a small one, from two obvious considerations; one is that the larger roof will sag more, and thereby approach more nearly to

Boarding tents.	Hucksters.
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a level towards the eaves, and the other is that there will be a larger accumulation of water on the larger roof in case of rain.

As to the propriety of having a boarding tent on the ground, that must be decided by circumstances. Generally, I have no doubt, it will be found conducive to the ends of the meeting to have such tent, provided it be in suitable hands, located on the ground, and wholly subject to the rules of the meeting. It should, however, be only a place for taking meals, and not at all a place for the sale of beers, candies, or the like. No huckstering should by any means be allowed about a Camp ground.

It is a convenient arrangement often made in some places, that a society, after providing the tent and their needful conveniences for lodging, engage some person to board the company at so much apiece. In such cases, the said person can generally provide meals for other per-

A convenient arrangement.

sons ; and if there are a considerable number of tents having such an arrangement on the ground, the necessity of a separate boarding tent is obviated. This is probably the more fortunate arrangement, but it is manifest that adequate provision should be made on the ground, in some way, for the due sustenance of such as may choose to attend the meeting ; and it is equally manifest that the victualling business should be on the ground, subject to the rules of the meeting, and under the control of the presiding officer.

CHAPTER IV.

REQUISITES FOR A GOOD CAMP MEETING.

Necessity of union among the preachers—What may be done by each preacher—Every member can do something—The great object—Presiding Elder should be head—Of police regulations on the Camp ground—Rules of order—Arrests—Order of exercises—Closing services.— Measures for securing permanent results.

We now come to certain other considerations of vital importance to a good Camp Meeting.

Small Camp Meetings are usually of little account, and often something worse than valueless ; therefore when it is proposed to hold one on any District, every preacher who does not desire to identify himself with it, should by all means oppose the holding of the meeting at all.

Let every such brother state all his objections

Unanimity in council.

plainly and fully in the council, and then, on taking the vote on the question of holding the meeting, if there is not a very near approach to unanimity, I would advise to reconsider immediately, and discuss further, till either the reluctant brethren pledge themselves to yield their prejudices to the majority, and identify themselves fully and heartily with the meeting, or the whole enterprise be abandoned or postponed. There are few misfortunes to a District greater of its kind, than a miserable failure of a Camp Meeting. Let us never attempt to draw out the forces of Zion for one of these tremendous onsets upon the powers of darkness, while there is distraction in our councils, and faintness in the heart of officers and men.

There is no such thing as mediocrity in a Camp Meeting. To escape contempt, it must be the greatest assemblage and the most thrilling occasion of religious worship known to the church.

The preachers must take the lead.

When, therefore, it has been resolved to hold one for any District, the Presiding Elder, in his larger sphere of influence, and the preachers upon their respective charges, should labor unremittingly to rally the people to the ground *from every part of the District*. In this thing the preachers *must take the lead*. I have been upon several charges where the people have coolly said at first, "We don't go to Camp Meetings here;" but with proper exertion have never thus far failed to see a good representation of my flock on the ground.

Let the preachers show that they, and, so far as possible, their families also, are identified with the meeting about to be held; let them announce it from Sabbath to Sabbath with emphasis; let them pray publicly and earnestly, as well as privately, for the blessing of God upon the coming occasion; let them exhort the people to pray for it also, *whether they intend to*

Special prayer meeting. Every member can do something.

go or not; and finally, let a special prayer meeting be held on the evening before starting for the meeting, if it be practicable. These measures, taken with the proper spirit, will bring the blessing of God in a baptism of power upon preacher and people; and they will generally inspire large numbers, *both out of the church and in*, with a determination to attend, who had else scarcely thought of the thing. Every member of the church can do something to add to the interest of the coming occasion; and that whether they can go themselves or not.

Let a mother, for instance, who, for any reason, cannot attend in person, fit out a daughter, and entrust her to the special care of some judicious female friend of congenial tastes and ardent piety, spending herself some hours in special prayer every day for the salvation of her child during the meeting.



Expedients adopted by Jewish families anciently.

Let a son be sent, with arrangements thus suited to his position and character.

Many families can contribute something toward the getting up of a tent, and others can assume a few small cares for a neighboring family, to enable them to attend.

A thousand expedients like the above must be supposed to have been adopted by Jewish families anciently, when every family of all their tribes must either appear, or at least be represented at their feast of Tabernacles: and who shall tell what boundless blessings would come upon our Israel, were all our multiplied households constrained by zeal for God to represent themselves in some way at the Feast.

All members of the church who cannot be present themselves, should plead with God daily and earnestly for his blessing upon the meeting. And if there are any who can only attend a single day, going in the proper spirit, they will

Attend with a right spirit.

The object a spiritual one.

doubtless find it highly profitable. Thus every member of the church can contribute something to the interests of this extraordinary means of grace ; and if this were done in a single instance, results incalculably great and glorious would doubtless follow.

The spirit with which individuals and societies attend Camp Meeting has much to do with their own profit, and with the general success of the meeting. Remember from the first, the object is wholly a spiritual one. Salvation—present salvation. Purity for the church and pardon for sinners. These are the ends aimed at on the Camp ground. They are co-ordinate in God's method. What is done for one is done for the other. Therefore fix on these. Cry to God for the anointing spirit upon your own soul, and labor and pray with what grace you have, and what you can get, for the salvation of the lost around you.

There must be a general head.

The Presiding Elder.

On the Camp ground, as in the army, and for similar reasons, there must be a general Head.

The circumstances must be extraordinary indeed, to render it at all proper that that office should devolve on any other than the Presiding Elder of the District: but woe to the Camp Meeting, and to the luckless Methodists on the ground, if the said Presiding Elder should happen to be a lily-fingered gentleman, who will handle the whole thing at arms' length, and with his finger-ends, instead of putting himself where he belongs, in the very fore-front of the hottest battle. Of course, he should oversee the preparation of the ground, and be present, and order all the services, from first to last, if his health permit. He may very properly associate with himself such brethren as he sees fit, as advisers, but should be ready, at all times, to give direction to the movements of the encampment.

Police regulations.	Why necessary.
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Very much, both of the success and the reputation of a Camp Meeting, depends upon the due maintenance of proper police regulations on the ground.

Some strictness of control is rendered necessary by the following facts : 1. Large numbers of people of reckless character attend Camp Meetings, although they seldom, if ever, visit any other place of worship. It is one of the designs of these meetings that this should be so.

2. Nearly all persons, not decidedly religious, are disposed to take liberties in a forest, which they would not do in a church ; on the same principle that the code of morals which governed a man in New York, usually fails to govern him in California.

Rules of order, however, should be as lenient as may consist with a due attention to propriety, but such as are made should be insisted on with great firmness. It is well to have the

Rules of order.	Arrests.
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“rules of order” printed, and posted in conspicuous places, and the attention of the congregation directed to them, that no one may be ignorant of them.

When it is at all probable that there will be occasion to use the civil authority, which so amply protects Camp Meetings in these States, it is advisable to have one civil officer or more on the ground, by special engagement, and in case an arrest is to be made, the said officer is the one to make it, and not the officers of the church, unless there be an overruling necessity for it.

- Whenever there is a clear indication of intention to disturb the meeting, whether it be by one person or by several, an arrest should always immediately follow the first decided overt act of disorder.

Hesitancy betrays irresolution, and is immediately understood by the irreverent blasphemer

Good order.How maintained.

as a symptom, not of moderation, but of weakness and fear, on the part of the authority which he knows should govern him. There is little more difficulty in controlling a congregation on the Camp ground than in a church, when once it is fully understood that the rules must be obeyed; but there are many places in the country where this will not be understood till some persons known to their associates as ring-leaders of immorality shall have been made examples of for their warning.

Every thing depends upon the due union of firmness with discretion. Government should be so exercised as to demonstrate to all concerned that *order will be maintained* at all events, and at the same time there should be such moderation as to enlist both the judgment and the sympathies of community in favor of the measures pursued. It is an interesting fact, that when once a meeting has been properly and thoroughly

Order of exercises.

governed in any place, there is seldom any difficulty in that place afterwards.

As to the order of exercises and of domestic arrangements, I have generally noticed that the following worked well:

1. Rise at five, or half-past five in the morning.
2. Family prayer and breakfast from half-past six to half-past seven.
3. General prayer meeting at the altar, led by several ministers appointed by the Presiding Elder, at half-past eight, A. M.
4. Preaching at half-past ten, followed by prayer meeting to twelve, M.
5. Dine at half-past twelve, P. M.
6. Preaching at two, or half-past two, P. M., followed by prayer at the altar till five.
7. Tea at six, P. M.
8. Preaching at half-past seven, followed by prayer meeting at the altar till nine or ten.
9. All strangers to leave the ground and the

Prayer meetings at altar.

people to retire at ten, or immediately thereafter.

The prayer meetings at the altar, after preaching, should be strongly manned with a good number of preachers and official members, and under the control of the Presiding Elder, who should lead the exercises from the stand, or employ some other person to do so.

Special circumstances will occasionally dictate a departure from any prescribed routine, and yet it is good to have an established order, and to adhere to it with some tenacity.

On the last night of the meeting, the services are sometimes protracted through the night. Commonly this is of doubtful utility. A very appropriate method of closing the services is, after taking the names of such as have been converted, with the view to proper future attentions to them, to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper. It is generally better to



Closing services.

have these closing services in the evening than in the morning, for the obvious reason that it is impossible to avoid some degree of hurry and distraction among the people on the morning upon which the encampment is to break up, and they are to journey to their homes.

It will often happen that special blessings will have fallen upon some particular society on the ground, or that several persons residing in a given neighborhood will have been converted during the meeting. In all such cases, let the preacher whose charge covers that ground appoint a meeting immediately, in that place, and follow it up from evening to evening as he may have ability. Very great revivals have sometimes thus occurred.

In New York I believe it is common, perhaps invariable, to hold what is called a Camp Meeting prayer meeting in some church, on the evening after the close of the Camp Meeting.

Camp Meeting prayer meetings.

That meeting is employed as the special occasion for gathering the young converts into the fold.

A similar expedient would work well among our churches in the country. At all events, it is the dictate of a wholesome spiritual economy to preserve to the church whatever vantage ground she may have gained over her enemy in the late battle.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION.

Large numbers of persons brought into the church by Camp Meetings—These meetings have been undervalued—Carelessly appointed—Poorly sustained—Badly conducted—And yet bore some fruit—A District Camp ground—Style of services demanded—Primitive Camp Meetings—They are adapted to this age—Its characteristics—Relation of Christianity to the activities of the age—Her duty—Conclusion.

Finally, it is not easy to fix a limit to the usefulness of this astonishing means of grace, into the use of which the church was so wonderfully led.

When properly attended and conducted, they always have possessed great attractions, and have commonly drawn larger numbers together under the sound of the gospel, than any other means

Immense influence of Camp Meetings.

of grace whatever. Indeed, so large has been their influence, that probably not far from one-fourth of all the members of the Methodist Episcopal church have been brought within her pale through the influence, direct or remote, of this form of religious effort.

And yet it is evident, that with the exception of a few localities, the leading minds of the church have not been largely identified with them, nor does it seem that any considerable attention has been paid to their improvement, or to the methods by which they are to be adapted, from time to time, to the shifting phases of society.

Another peculiar means of grace, so honored of God, on the one hand, and so little appreciated by the church, on the other, does not exist among Methodists.

Indeed, a surer method of disgracing, not only Camp Meetings, but the whole church,



Carelessly appointed.**Poorly sustained.**

could scarcely have been devised, than that which has been pursued in many places.

The meeting has often been appointed to be held for a single charge, and with no prospect of more than an attendance contemptibly small. There has often been little apparent forethought in the selection of the time, and next to none at all either in the selection or preparation of the ground. There has been no effort to secure a large attendance of our members and ministers, and there is reason to believe that there has often been comparatively little prayer beforehand, to call down the blessing of God upon the meeting. A few of both preachers and people have attended and identified themselves with the meeting. Usually a considerable proportion of these have been persons of least experience and weight of character among us. The whole movement has been sadly wanting in Christian dignity and weight. The preaching

Prayer meetings at altar.

has been sometimes adapted to promote a sort of spiritual hilarity, rather than to minister to the edification and sanctification of the church. The public prayer meetings at the altar have been left to the control of persons more remarkable for impulse than solid sense, or depth of piety; and generally in such cases, the result has been about such as might have been anticipated.

Nay. I beg pardon — There has been less disorder and more fruit at some of these meetings, than any one had a right to expect: while, on the other hand, wherever these means of grace have been thoroughly sustained and properly conducted, they have almost invariably produced immense harvests of spiritual profit to the church. Let us henceforth sustain them as they deserve. Let us have no more Camp Meetings than we *can* sustain. Whenever one is appointed, let us rally around it, and do all

Camp ground must be improved. The preaching required.

in our power to make it a great and a useful meeting. Our grounds must be selected with care, and be thoroughly prepared. We must render the grove inviting and delightful. We have improved the style of our dwellings and our churches; we must improve the style of our Camp grounds, and adapt them to the times. We ought to have in every District, if possible, a Ground for permanent use, and fitted and furnished in the best possible manner. No other equal outlay would pay as well in results. We need the very best of preaching on the Camp ground. *Preaching*; not dry, dogmatic theorizing; not metaphysical hair splitting; not pulpit bombast; but plain, clear, evangelical, Bible truth, uttered with faithful, solemn, earnestness, and with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The prayer meetings must be thoroughly manned with ministers and laymen who have *power with God and man*. Our mem-

Results of Camp Meetings formerly.

bers must be urged to go, and pressed into the work when there.

A Camp Meeting thus sustained and conducted can never result in defeat. Thanks be to God, the spirit of Camp Meetings is reviving in the country.

In several instances in the primitive days of these meetings, a large Camp Meeting resulted in the salvation of more than a thousand souls. It may be so again — nay, I believe it *will* be so again. With the improvements, for which there is now a loud call, they will be found adapted even more perfectly to the present period than they have been to the past. Their unique and striking character, their mammoth proportions, their powerful impulses, and their immense and rapid transactions, quadrate exactly with the spirit of the age.

Beyond all precedent, this is an age of progress and innovation in nearly every human pursuit.

Progress of the age.

Old methods are abandoned, old opinions exploded, and old limits transcended on every hand. The hand wheel has given place to the jenny, the knitting needle to the loom, and the steam engine has knocked the shuttle from a thousand hands, to seize and propel it itself with a thousand-fold velocity.

The war-steamer's thundering trump is heard in every sea, and the rural villages are startled by the snort of the iron horse.

The old county Fair has suggested the World's Exhibition, and the circus has sprung into the hippodrome.

In sin, too, men are unhesitating and rampant. They sin on a large scale, and with a bold hand.

Hundreds of presses teem with a literature insiduously demoralizing and thoroughly damning; and exhibitions of nude forms, both in sculpture and painting, are helping on the work of corrupting the imagination and debasing the heart.

The Church should keep pace with the times.

It is not strange, therefore, that a wonderful precocity in wickedness marks our times, and that men are seen to mine down to infernal depths of depravity, even in youth, as if they were indeed in haste to be damned.

Is this, then, the time for the church to beat a retreat from her bolder positions, and fall back upon mere routine?

Nay, verily. Let her adapt the style of her operations to the characteristics of the minds on which she seeks to act. The torpor of the dark ages is gone, and the world is awake and moving. Christianity is doubtless herself the source of the immense impulses now driving human society forward through a larger number of stadia of progress in a decade, than it once made in several centuries of years. Let her show herself equal to the times she has introduced. The winds are out, and she awoke them. Let her not seek to lay the storm,

Undue prominence not claimed.

but mount and guide it by the helm of truth.

The peculiar means of grace advocated and sought to be improved and promoted in this little volume, are only one of a thousand expedients by which the church can keep herself prominently before the eye of society, and in a position to mould its character, and shape its ends. Nor does the writer contend that the Camp Meeting is a principal instrumentality of the church.

It were, indeed, a bold position, to affirm such principal character of any of her mere expedients. Pastorates, presses, Sunday schools, missions, Bible societies, seminaries, colleges, tract societies—these are the implements with which she ceaselessly plies society, and vindicates her life. But she cannot spare from the catalogue of her appliances any one of the peculiar and occasional methods which have contributed so

Let the tribes of Israel go up.

Success certain.

immensely as the Camp Meeting has done, to strengthen her paternal bonds, nourish her life, and promote her aggressions.

Let, then, the tribes of our Israel gather annually to the tented woodland. Let every minister and every man, whether venerable in years, or fresh in youth, be at his post.

Let there be no idlers among us ; no preaching or praying for a name ; no gossip ; no rant ; no idle thronging ; no beating the air ; but a united, well aimed series of efforts in God's name, that shall drive home the gospel steel at every blow.

Thus conducted, there should, by the blessing of God, be no such thing as failure on the Camp ground. The church would be quickened the mourner comforted, and hundreds awakened and converted. And dark-minded, evil men, who would not yield to truth, should yet confess, "God is come into the camp."



